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RASH VOWS,

OR,

THE EFFECTS OF ENTHUSIASM.

A NOVEL.

Boulart de Sillery. (S. F.)

Translated from the FRENCH of

MADAME DE GENLIS,

AUTHOR OF THE THEATRE OF EDUCATION, ADELAIDE AND THEODORE, &c. &c.

Eh! le vœu le plus libre et le plus volontaire,
Au Dieu qui prévoit tout, peut sembler téméraire!

LA HARPE.

La modération est le tréſor du ſage. VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

LADY EDWARD FITZGERALD,

AND

MRS. HENRIETTA MATTHIESON.

My dear and faithful Friends,

How pleaſing it is to me to unite ſuch pure and reſpectable names, and to prefix them to a Work which I preſume to think is the moſt moral Romance in our language; perhaps the only one that young people, and even thoſe whoſe education is far advanced, may be permitted to read. I have in ſeveral works depicted vice with all its horror and abſurdity, but in this I have only endeavoured to ſhew the dangerous conſequences of exceſſive delicacy and extreme ſenſibility. You, my daughters by adoption—you, who from infancy have been attached to each other by the

the precious bonds of the tendereſt friendſhip—you, whoſe conſtant affection has afforded me an inexhauſtible ſource of true conſolation—receive this as a token of maternal gratitude. You will only find, in this Work, inſtructions which may ſtill be profitable to ſouls endued with your happy diſpoſitions. A perufal of theſe pages will confirm you in the ſalutary and well-founded opinion, that without wiſdom, and conſequently without moderation, ſenſibility is only a fatal gift. It will prove to you, that without the aid of reaſon, even virtue itſelf, loſing its noble character by deviating from the invariable principles which ought to direct its operations, is only guided by the moſt imprudent and violent paſſions; and then, following extravagant and dangerous impulſes, deceived by a doleful terror, or ſacrificing itſelf to deſpair, it ſooner or later falls the victim of its temerity.

RASH

RASH VOWS.

SAINVILLE was reckoned one of the moſt happy courtiers. "What can be wanting to the happineſs of a man," ſaid they, "ſo amiable and handſome, ſo diſtinguiſhed by a thouſand graces, and by ſucceſs in all his undertakings; poſſeſſing an immenſe fortune, youth, and freedom; enjoying the reputation that military talents, illuſtrious birth, wit, and eſteem afford; what more can he deſire, and what lot can be compared to his?"

Such was the general opinion of Sainville. Thus the world judge of brilliant appearances; which are almoſt always deceitful.

Let us liſten to Sainville himſelf, ſupping *tête-a-tête* with his friend. "Yes, my dear baron," ſaid he to him, "I am upon the verge of that fatal ſituation which one of our poets has ſo well depicted in theſe energetic lines:

"Je reſpire ſans vivre, et m'étiens ſans mourir."

"Thanks be to Heaven!" interrupted the baron, "nothing as yet announces in you ſymptoms of conſumption; and I do not perceive upon your countenance any trace of that cruel malady."—"True," replied Sainville: "but this diſorder proceeds from the heart; and mine is dejected and exhauſted. Yes, ſatiated with every kind of pleaſure, I can no longer enjoy any; a frightful void ſucceeds the phantom that deceived and left me: in ſhort, chagrin conſumes and devours me."—"My friend," ſaid the baron, "you are not the firſt who paid fortune with ingratitude: but being only thirty-two years old, you

you may again reliſh glory and pleaſure."— "During the war," replied Sainville, "I loved glory with enthuſiaſm. I was then happy; for my heart requires to be animated by great ſentiments and a predominant paſſion. I have performed ſome brilliant exploits, and I have received with tranſport, even with intoxication, I confeſs, the favours and marks of diſtinction which were the recompence of them. But do you really think that they were due to my conduct? If my uncle had not been the lover of Madame de ***, and if Madame de Flamigny, in order to ſerve me, had not yielded to the paſſion of the miniſter at war, I ſhould not have been better treated than poor Duval, who, in the ſame campaign, did prodigies of valour, and obtained nothing from court. Thus I am indebted for the favours that have been laviſhed upon me only to the intrigues of my uncle and the infidelity of my miſtreſs. This diſcovery

has conſiderably diminiſhed my love for glory. In ſhort, three years of peace have given me time for obſervation and reflexion. I have ſeen how favours and honours are obtained, and I know how to appreciate the countenance of princes and the voice of the people: that is to ſay, I am cured of ambition."—"You are now a philoſopher," ſaid the baron: "but a philoſopher and a courtier are incompatible beings, and I am not ſurpriſed to ſee you grieved. That is the work of theſe deteſtable encyclopediſts: although you do not like them, you have adopted their philoſophy."—"No, no," replied Sainville; "I ſhall never adopt a philoſophy without doctrine; a philoſophy compoſed of ſeveral incoherent ſyſtems, and an infinite number of opinions contradictory to each other. Thoſe who preach by turns, for and againſt, ſhall never enrol me in their ſect. Where I ſee inconſiſtency, I am ſure to find folly and artifice; I am therefore the

diſciple

diſciple neither of Voltaire, Rouſſeau, nor Diderot; and I am not even that of true philoſophers. I love and admire Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Fenelon, but I have neither their wiſdom nor their philanthropy. Like them, I judge and am ſtruck with the errors, follies, and vices which the great theatre of the court and the world preſents to my view: but having been myſelf abandoned to all theſe errors, I experience more diſguſt than contempt. I view objects, ſuch as they are, without having the happy title of eſteeming myſelf the more for it; and I am not ſo far deluded as to confound the diſguſt ariſing from ſatiety with a virtuous indignation. In a word, diſcontented with others and with myſelf, I have loſt my ſenſibility; my imagination is ſuppreſſed; I vegetate careleſsly, without forming any projects and without deſires; my heart no longer ſpeaks to me, and my feeble reaſon only inſpires me with melancholy and vain regrets."—"So, then," ſaid the baron, "you

have become a miſanthrope?"—"Ah! would to heaven I were!" exclaimed Sainville. "I ſhould not then languiſh under this inſupportable apathy, which deprives the ſoul of all its faculties; I ſhould be inſpired with violent ſentiments; I ſhould profoundly meditate; I ſhould be agitated, irritated, touched, and always very much occupied; I ſhould deteſt the world and mankind; and indeed I am now perfectly indifferent about them. Happy he whoſe heart is not only ſuſceptible of love, but likewiſe of hatred! To have no feeling, is no longer to exiſt." At theſe words, Sainville fell into a dull reverie; when the baron, with ſurpriſe, ſilently gazed upon him, and after a few minutes pauſe reſuming the diſcourſe, "I am quite aſtoniſhed," ſaid he; "for I perceive that you ſpeak but too ſeriouſly. I have for a long time obſerved a conſiderable change in your diſpoſition, but I attributed it to very different cauſes, and particularly to your rupture

ture with Madame de Tervures."—"You ſtrangely deceive yourſelf," replied Sainville; "I am too well acquainted with women, to be ſuſceptible of that happy reſentment which you ſuppoſe in me."—"You judge women with too much ſeverity," ſaid the baron. "Some are ſenſible and——"—"At heart," interrupted Sainville, "your opinion is much the ſame as mine: but you are pleaſed to be their dupe. Your romantic ſpirit makes you find in gallantry all the charms of love, and enables them to deceive you. For my part, I wiſh I could find a woman who could inſpire me with a paſſion: but I have never met with any."—"What!" exclaimed the baron; "you who have captivated ſo many hearts——"—"Yes, *hearts*," replied Sainville, ſighing: "but I am quite tired with the inſipid, monotonous, childiſh, and fatiguing conduct of a man of intrigue. What is the reſult of all thoſe brilliant ſucceſſes? to ſhew ſenti-

ments which are not our own—to practiſe every poſſible artifice to carry a prude or a coquette whither they wiſh to be ſecretly conducted. What is more ridiculous and fooliſh than to employ all the reſources of our mind and imagination, to triumph over a ſcruple that does not exiſt, to conquer a reſiſtance that is only apparently ſuch, and to receive a deceiving oath, to which no value is attached? My friend," continued Sainville, "there is, in what is called high life, a particular character of littleneſs and duplicity which ſhocks me, and ſeems to be peculiar to this age. Every ſoul is debaſed. I ſee monſtrous vices, and I do not diſcover noble paſſions. This is certainly the height of depravation, and it ought to be the laſt degree of corruption." —"Well," replied the baron, "drive away chagrin by uſeful occupations; read, work, ſeek in ſtudy and ſcience happineſs which has fled from you by diſſipation." —"Ah! how can I?" interrupted Sainville.

ville. "I have a thouſand times vainly attempted it, but every thing conſpires to oppoſe me, particularly the connexions with which I cannot break off, (although the heart undoubtedly has not formed them,) and which here torment and ſurround me."—"Fly farther off," ſaid the baron: "go, if neceſſary, two hundred leagues diſtance, in order to ſeek tranquillity and liberty."—"I conſent," replied Sainville, "and am ready to depart: but happineſs is only a chimera, and tranquillity is an inſipid benefit, the idea of which offers me but little charms."—"However, let us go," ſaid the baron, "try a new mode of life; for in your preſent ſituation you muſt gain by the change. Rely upon me; I will not quit you." At theſe words Sainville, with indifference, approves of the ſcheme, and his friend urges him to execute it; orders are iſſued for the neceſſary preparations, and it is determined they ſhall ſet out the following

day to an eſtate belonging to Sainville, ſituated at the extremity of Languedoc, one hundred and five leagues from Paris.

The baron de Verceil, this friend of Sainville, who was about thirty years of age, joined to an excellent heart a character full of integrity and generoſity. His mind, more cultivated than enlarged, had more delicacy than ſolidity; and his ſoul had leſs energy than ſenſibility. He loved literature, and his taſte for poetry and romance gave to his ideas and converſation a romantic turn, which generally pleaſed women. Moderate in all his affections, little ſuſceptible of violent ſentiments, and having never experienced any, the whole charm of love, according to his idea, conſiſted in myſtery and gallantry. He was ſatisfied, provided his imagination was occupied about an intrigue; and he liked almoſt as well to be the confidant as the hero of it. Born with a middling fortune,

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and a name little known, he owed his military advancement, many court favours, and the happineſs he enjoyed, to the friendſhip of Sainville. Such motives of gratitude had inſpired him with the moſt faithful and tender attachment for Sainville, whom he loved and admired as the moſt amiable and brilliant man he knew, and in whom he diſcovered the moſt extraordinary qualities and greatneſs of ſoul. Accuſtomed, from his infancy, to conſider his intimacy with Sainville as the only cauſe of the eſteem which he enjoyed, he always heartily rejoiced at the glory and ſucceſs of his friend; and being the confidant of his caſual taſtes, the amorous intrigues of Sainville were always of more importance to him than his own. Sainville's miſtreſs ever appeared to him the moſt perfect heroine of romance; he ſoon became her intimate friend, and commonly charged himſelf with conſoling her, when the inclinations of Sainville were

turned towards another object. The baron, without poſſeſſing the ſuperiority of mind and graces of Sainville, was amiable, eſpecially among women, becauſe he always appeared to liſten to them with intereſt and credulity, and to believe that their nervous complaints and frequent faintings were cauſed by ſenſibility. Beſides he was well bred, had a noble mien, and much politeneſs. His mind was adorned with all the uſual ſentiments that could be agreeably repeated (in particular ſubjects) upon love, friendſhip, ſympathy, the delights of rural life, &c. He loved the arts, and, above all, muſic: he knew how to admire and turn to advantage the little talents of ſociety: he was enraptured liſtening to a woman ſinging a romance, or playing upon the harp or piano forte: he was a great admirer of the lectures or eſſays read in company, from any of which he was never abſent; and he extolled to the ſkies every manuſcript work read by the author

author to a party of *fifty or ſixty friends*. Moreover the baron had been twice in London and once in Switzerland, which had furniſhed him with the means of occaſionally deſcanting, if not in a novel manner, at leaſt with ſucceſs, upon *liberty*, *Engliſh verdure*, *the ſurpriſing effects of nature*, and the *ſenſations* we feel at the brink of a precipice, or upon the top of a mountain. To finiſh the baron de Verceil's character in a proper manner, we muſt add, that the good taſte which a witty and delicate mind neceſſarily acquires at court and in high life, preſerved him from that inſipidity which an extreme affability and an exceſſive complaiſance ſometimes give. He had acquired that art of contradiction which, far from ever degenerating into diſputation, only rendered converſation more agreeable, and added greater weight to his opinion. It gave him particular pleaſure to contradict Sainville, ſometimes for the purpoſe of diſplaying his own

own wit and that of his friend, and ſometimes to diſguiſe himſelf, and to conceal the great aſcendancy which Sainville had over him. In fine, the baron de Verceil poſſeſſed thoſe qualities which were fitted to inſpire eſteem, and render him agreeable in ſociety: but he had not that tranſcendant merit which excites envy and hatred; ſo that he was generally beloved, whilſt Sainville, more brilliant and diſtinguiſhed by ſuperior wit and talents, notwithſtanding the dignity of his character, and although he had never ſullied his reputation, had a greater number of enemies and detractors.

In the mean time, according to the orders of the two friends, the poſt horſes arrive. Sainville ſees, with indifference, the preparations for his departure; his friend prevails upon him, and they get into the carriage, accompanied only by Mr. Renaud, ſurgeon and great botaniſt, a phlegmatic and abſent man, who had been attached

tached to Sainville many years. They are now upon their road to Languedoc; Mr. Renaud reflecting, the baron expatiating, and Sainville falling asleep. At day-break, the baron, addressing himself to Mr. Renaud, exclaims, "What a pleasure it is to quit Paris at this season, when the country is so delightful! Behold these meadows, these woods, and this beautiful fresh verdure, which reminds me of that of England! Is not all this transporting?"—"What noisy exclamations!" said Sainville, waking. "How can the sight of objects so common excite such lively transports!"—"Do not ridicule them," replied the baron. "I flatter myself that one day, when you have got rid of your torpor, you will experience them in your turn."—"I do what you wish," said Sainville; "I leave Paris; and this complaisance will cost me but little, since all is equally alike to me, and I do not regret the world: but I have no desire for solitude;

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and I think, beſides, that rural life is not much ſuited to my condition. In order to like it, there is a neceſſity for having a new and tender heart. Judge if it can be agreeable to mine."—"Well," cried the baron, "your heart is more new than you imagine; it is only unoccupied, and can never be drained, for it was never filled. For my own part, I am glad to reſt myſelf from the fatiguing diſſipation of high life. It is true I regret ſome friends, whoſe agreeable company particularly delights me: but the pleaſure of writing to them is a very happy compenſation. Nothing in the world is more agreeable than a correſpondence carried on with women of refined wit and ſenſe; for example, ſuch as Madame de Tervures, who writes like Madame de Sévigné." At theſe words Sainville, ſhrugging up his ſhoulders, diſdainfully ſmiled. "Yes," purſued the baron, "her letters will one day form the moſt intereſting collection; and likewiſe

thoſe of Madame de S——, who has not, perhaps, the ſpiritedneſs and graces of Madame de Tervures, but ſhe has an original ſtyle, and abundance of truly extraordinary ideas. Her manner of writing has much affinity to that of Rouſſeau. I might even quote Madame de Flamigny——" —"Very well," interrupted Sainville, with irony; "and we will compare her to *Paſcal*, although her morality is not ſo auſtere. So, you are going to keep up a ſublime correſpondence? I congratulate you upon it. For my part, as I have for a long time had the misfortune of finding, in what are called *pretty letters*, nothing but great pretenſions and nonſenſe, I intend to write only to my ſteward; that is to ſay, a note of ſix lines every month."— "Every one to his taſte," replied the baron, peeviſhly. "You reprobate every thing, nothing pleaſes you, and all is irkſome to you. As for myſelf, I love to give praiſe; I approve and admire perhaps

too

too readily, but I enjoy even my illuſions: I amuſe myſelf, and am happy."—"Far from criticiſing you," replied Sainville, "I envy you; and think, that if a perſon could adopt a character, it would be your's I ſhould chooſe." The converſation ended here. The baron, who had a romance in his pocket, began to read, and Sainville and Mr. Renaud in a few minutes fell aſleep again. They now ſtopped to dine, when the baron, delighted with what he had been reading, communicated it to Sainville, whom nothing could raiſe from his lethargy. He anſwered with indifference and confuſion; and if he ſometimes appeared a little enlivened, it was only to give vent to ſome poignant ſatire againſt the world, the court, and the ſex; for proportionally as the heart becomes inſenſible, the judgment is more ſound, and the mind more ſubtle. Men of gaiety and ſenſibility are liable to infatuation; they behold every thing in the beſt point of view:

view: but inſenſible people criticiſe and ſee objects ſuch as they are really are.

Thus they ſpent the journey. At length the two friends arrive, upon the firſt of May, at L——, when all the inhabitants run in crowds to meet Sainville, whom they had not ſeen ſince his childhood, and they follow his carriage, weeping for joy. Sainville, at this ſpectacle, coolly ſaid, "I was ten years old when I left this place, and behold how tranſported they are to ſee me again! How ſilly and ſtupid the people are every where!"—"Ah!" ſaid the baron "theſe poor people ſuppoſe you to be juſt and good, which makes them weep for joy; and if their conjecture be right, have they not reaſon to do ſo?" Our three travellers, followed by an immenſe multitude, now enter the chateau; the old keeper, quite enraptured to ſee his maſter again, burſts into tranſports of joy; and the baron, equally communicative and ſenſible, immediately enters into friendſhip with

with him, and loſes not a moment in queſtioning and being informed of the days when the poſt arrives and ſets out; a matter particularly intereſting to him, for he was one of the greateſt letter-writers of the age.

After having paſſed through two porches, they entered an extenſive gallery, filled with family portraits. At this ſight the baron is perfectly enraptured. He contemplates, with extreme delight and a ſecret pride, theſe old pictures, at the bottom of which were written, in golden characters, the names and titles of the perſons they repreſented. "We could here make a ſummary of the hiſtory of France," exclaimed he, "and even trace it back beyond the time of Charlemagne! What antiquity and illuſtrioufneſs! I am quite charmed to know the traits of that famous Count de ——, who behaved ſo valiantly at the battle of Bouvines! What a martial air! What looks full of animation!

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and that one, who periſhed at the engagement of Maſoure; and this brave captain, who was made priſoner at the battle of Poitiers—Ah! here is the worthy friend of the great Gueſclin! All this ſide deſcribes to us the moſt mighty feats of antient chivalry. Good God! what large ſhoulders theſe antient chevaliers had, and what ſtature! How little we are, in compariſon of theſe people! Ah! here is a miniſter of ſtate, who was the greateſt politician of his time; and here is one of the favourites of Henry III. What a beauty! That is the head of Antinoüs! But here is another, much more worthy of fixing our attention, who was one of the friends of Henry IV. What a glorious title! Friend of the greateſt and beſt of kings and of men!—We now come to the age of Louis XIV.; the paintings are ſo much better! That head of the Marſhal de **** is ſuperb: it is by Rigault, I am certain. Ah! I perceive the beautiful

Ducheſs

Ducheſs of ****! It is delightful! And that head of the Marquis of **** is abſolutely in the manner of Vandyke! Theſe two pictures deſerve to be put upon a new canvaſs. How I admire that ancient coſtume, theſe long cravats with lace, and theſe knots of ſcarlet riband! There is a peculiar dignity in that dreſs!—It muſt require at leaſt eight days to examine and be well acquainted with this numerous collection. I have never ſeen one ſo complete. The ancients, at their funerals, made the buſts of the deceaſed be carried before them, but it is much more agreeable to be ſurrounded by thoſe reſpectable images during their lives. When we can reckon heroes among our anceſtors, it is pleaſant to recollect them: it is allowable, and even ſalutary, to be proud of them. We wiſh to render ſtill more illuſtrious a name which is already famous, and we deſire to imitate what we admire." During this long diſcourſe, Sainville was wandering

dering ſlowly through the gallery, when ſuddenly finding himſelf oppoſite his father's portrait, he recollected it, ſtopped, and gazed upon it, the tears ſtarting in his eyes. Roger (which was the name of the keeper), being very near him, obſerved, with delight, this emotion of filial tenderneſs, and could not refrain from exclaiming his approbation of his maſter's ſenſibility. At the ſame moment the tears of Sainville were dried up; he looked at Roger with an air of ſurpriſe and moroſity, and reſuming a calm and unconcerned countenance, left the picture, took another turn in the gallery, and then went out. This apparent capriciouſneſs was not affectation; for Sainville's tenderneſs was at that moment excited, and he at the ſame time felt a diſagreeable embarraſſment upon meeting the obſerving eye of Roger.

Born with profound ſenſibility, having always been alternately courted and de-

ceived by women void of principles and morals, and having never found a heart which correſponded with his own, Sainville miſtook the ſatiety ariſing from pleaſure and diſſipation for the calouſneſs of a heart quite dejected. Too proud and too delicate to experience common ambition, and too enlightened to ſet a value upon the diſtinctions granted to birth or intrigue, he deſpiſed the court, and was diſguſted with the world. Carrying every thing to extremes, he liked to think himſelf, and to appear to others abſolutely inſenſible. This ſtate of mind ſeemed to him preferable to a more moderate one, as he found a ſort of originality in it that better accorded with his ſelf-love, and his ſplenetic and diſdainful temper. Beſides, being forcibly ſtruck with the affected ſenſibility ſo common in people of high life, his averſion to hypocriſy made him frequently aſſume the falſe appearance of a want of ſenſibility. He loved the baron, and revered

vered ſeveral engaging qualities he poſſeſſed, but he neither eſteemed his diſpoſition nor his wit, as he always appeared to him emphatical, full of exaggeration, and often even ridiculous. He had that kind of confidence in him which is inſpired by habit, and which cannot be ſeparated from a ſincere attachment: but he had not that which reſults from ſympathy, nor did he ever feel a deſire of imparting to him the impreſſions he received; yet he neither concealed from him his actions nor his ſchemes. He entruſted him with his moſt important ſecrets, and ſtill he was almoſt never tempted to diſcloſe his ſentiments to him. Going out of the gallery, Sainville enters the parlour, whither the baron ſoon follows him. Soon after they ſat down to table, and during dinner Roger entertained them with the hiſtory of the country. "Have you any neighbours here?" demanded the baron. "No, ſir," anſwered Roger; "this chateau is quite ſolitary, and our

neareſt neighbours are three leagues off. But apropos about neighbours. I forgot to relate to you a ſtory, which much engages the attention of our village, and begins to make ſome noiſe in the province. About a year ago, a woman, travelling through theſe cantons, fell ill at Limoux, a ſmall town about four leagues diſtant from this place. She uſed to come, during her convaleſcence, to walk here, and was ſo delighted with the farm at the end of the village, that ſhe purchaſed it, together with the incloſure. She has been ſettled in it about eight or ten months, living like a hermit, and receiving no perſon. She has only two ſervants, a valet, who, like herſelf, is a foreigner, and who does not yet know the French language, and a maid-ſervant, whom ſhe hired in this country." At this recital the baron's curioſity was much excited, and he aſked a thouſand queſtions at once. "What is her age? What kind of figure has this woman? Of what

what country?"—"I cannot," anſwered Roger, "ſatisfy you upon any of theſe queſtions: we are ignorant of her birth, her country, and her age. She always goes out with a ſtraw hat, which covers half of her face; and the remainder is ſo hid by a thick gauze veil, that it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh her features."—"Since no one, in the courſe of ten months," interrupted Sainville, "has ſeen her face, it may be preſumed that ſhe is neither young nor handſome."—"On that account," replied Roger, "many people pretend that ſhe has ſome ſtrange deformity, which obliges her to hide herſelf. Some think that her face is naturally marked with wine, while others imagine her to be one-eyed. There are different ſtories about her: but theſe are only conjectures."—"And what ſays her ſervant?" aſked the baron. "O," replied Roger, "ſhe is ſuch a ſilly little girl, that we can gain no intelligence from her. I aſked her, myſelf, if

her miſtreſs was ugly or handſome; when ſhe anſwered me that ſhe knew nothing about it, as ſhe was no judge of beauty; beſides, there are alſo many people who think ſhe is ſo remarkably handſome, that her exceſſive modeſty makes her conceal it."—"A likely ſtory!" cried Sainville, ſmiling. "O, I do not believe it," ſaid Roger quickly, upon ſeeing that his maſter made a jeſt of that notion: "but I am certain that ſhe is young, which may be ſeen by her ſhape and her gait." Here the baron aſked what kind of life ſhe led; when Roger anſwered, that ſhe paſſed for a ſaint, ſhe was ſo charitable and beneficent; and that the peaſants in the village called her nothing but *the good lady*. Roger added, that ſhe walked a great deal, but in the moſt ſolitary places; that one of her greateſt pleaſures was gathering plants in the fields, and cultivating flowers; that, in ſhort, he did not doubt but ſhe was ſome lady of diſtinction, retired

tired there to be more at liberty to ſerve God. Mr. Renaud, who till then had paid little attention to this recital, began to be intereſted when he heard of the ſtranger's taſte for plants. He conjectured that ſhe was the daughter or the widow of a botaniſt, and the baron combated this idea, which Sainville adopted. The baron aſked a number of queſtions about this extraordinary perſon, and inquired what name ſhe gave herſelf; when he learnt, with delight, that ſhe called herſelf Conſtance. Sainville paſſed ſome jokes upon this romantic name; and, already tired with this diſcourſe, he talked of other things. He employed the reſt of the day in viewing the chateau, criticiſing upon the Gothic and inconvenient diſtribution of the apartments; afterwards in viſiting the gardens, which were likewiſe not ſpared. The old man Roger ſuffered terribly, hearing his young maſter reprobating the hornbeam hedges and long

avenues, the end of which the eye can ſcarcely reach, which he had admired for forty years; and it was of no uſe his ſaying *the deceaſed marquis planted this labyrinth*; *the late marquis thought theſe walks and quincunxes admirable.* Sainville diſdainfully repeated, now and then, "All this is laid out with ſhocking bad taſte: I ſhall have it cut down." The baron, being paſſionately fond of Engliſh gardening, was of the ſame opinion, and emphatically repeated all the arguments he could collect againſt that ſymmetry, the ſtraight walks, and the trees cut in different forms, and in favour of *the imitation of beautiful nature*, and the *pictureſque effects* produced by the inequality of the ground. Poor Roger had ſtill one hope left: the two friends had not yet ſeen the moſt beautiful part of the garden, in which were a grand arbour formed of interwoven branches, and a grotto decorated with mother of pearl and ſhells. Theſe two pieces were famous

mous throughout the province; and Roger doubted not but Sainville, notwithſtanding his cenſorious humour, would pay the tribute of admiration which he had ſeen rendered to them for nearly half a century: but his expectation was cruelly diſappointed. In approaching theſe wonders of Languedoc, Roger, with an air of triumph, quickened his pace, looking ſtedfaſtly at his maſter; and as they advance, Sainville diſcovers the grotto and bower. "Ah! ah!" ſaid he, in a jeering tone, "a grotto and bowers! I expected ſo; for I ſhould have been very much ſurpriſed not to find theſe ornaments in ſuch a garden."—"Well," added the baron, "I am ſure that theſe maſter-pieces of bad taſte have coſt a great deal of money, for the labour of them is prodigious. What a pity ſuch a delightful part of the garden ſhould be thus ſpoiled, for the ſite is charming!"—"Yes," replied Sainville; and I ſhall put inſtead of theſe ridiculous

inventions a cottage and rocks." At theſe words Roger ſhuddered; and could not have diſſembled his exceſſive indignation and grief, had this diſcourſe been prolonged: but ſome drops of rain making them dread a ſtorm, they diſcontinued this diſſertation upon gardens, and quickly returned to the chateau. There they found Mr. Renaud, who had likewiſe juſt returned from his walk, but who had been ſimpling in the fields, and who ſaid that he had met the unknown lady, and had ſpoken to her; upon which the baron did not fail to queſtion him, and Mr. Renaud could give no other anſwer but that the lady was very polite, and appeared to be well acquainted with botany. As to the baron's queries reſpecting her ſhapes, her dreſs, and the ſound of her voice, they were of no uſe.

Next day the baron went out of the chateau, at ſeven o'clock in the morning, with Mr. Renaud, who conducted him towards

wards Conſtance's dwelling, near to which he had been the preceding day: but they waited and ſought in vain, for Conſtance did not appear; yet the baron wiſhed at leaſt to know her habitation. They accordingly went to the hill where it was ſituated, and ſaw a neat little houſe, newly whitened, and ſurrounded by a hawthorn hedge that formed the edge of a terrace, from which was diſcovered a charming proſpect. After having rambled ſome time round the houſe, the baron, being much diſcontented with his walk, returned to the chateau, where he was told that Sainville, deſirous of having ſome partitions in the apartments, was in his ſtudy with a carpenter; to which he repaired. "You come apropos," ſaid Sainville to him. "I have given all my orders; and Robert, who appears to love converſation, was talking to me about *the good lady*. He works for her, and has made, at her houſe, a book-caſe and ſome

other furniture: but he did not ſee her; for the ſervant told him what he was to do, and *the good lady* ſtayed conſtantly in a room which Robert had never entered. "Oh! yes," ſaid Robert, "ſhe is worſe than a nun; ſhe has certainly made a vow of ſolitude: but the report concerning the wine mark is falſe; for the ſervant told me that, on the contrary, her face is extremely pale, and that ſhe has the ſight of both eyes; beſides ſhe writes, ſhe draws, and has many other occupations. In the village, ſhe has given three ſuits of child-bed linen, made by herſelf; and ſhe alſo makes ozier baſkets as well as Charlotte. I have fixed a turning machine for her; and moreover ſhe plays upon a little organ, and ſings like a flute. I have myſelf heard her, but I cannot underſtand the words, which I believe are the Latin of her country." Robert, who never could ceaſe ſpeaking when he had begun any narration, was interrupted by the baron,

who

who desired a little more connexion in his recitals; and after having undergone a very long examination, Robert was dismissed. "Well, my dear Verceil," said Sainville, "here is a heroine of romance, with youth, talents, and singularity. If her person be agreeable, we must pursue this adventure. Will you attempt it?"—"Who, I? you are surely jesting!"—"But if this woman is handsome, interesting, witty——"—"These are undoubtedly great qualities; but were it even so, what impression could she make upon me? I am unhappily secure against every kind of temptation."—"I cannot say so. I confess, however, I have no desire to enter into any new intrigue, having engagements at Paris that I neither can nor will break; and it is merely curiosity which makes me wish to be acquainted with so singular a character."—"If she be young and handsome, she is really very singular; and to speak the truth, as I am not possessed of

your lively imagination, I have the rudeneſs to conceive her very ugly, and about forty years old. Roger thinks ſhe is young, becauſe ſhe walks quicker than himſelf, which a perſon at forty can very well do, and which only proves that ſhe has neither the gout nor the aſthma. As to her white complexion, my bad diſpoſition perſuades me that ſhe is extremely wan; for the expreſſion of *pale countenance*, which Robert employs, juſtifies this conjecture. But ſince you have no deſigns upon her, I ſhould be better pleaſed that ſhe were as I ſuppoſe, than according to the idea that you form of her. And why? If ſhe is a young and beautiful perſon, love is undoubtedly the cauſe of her extraordinary manner of living. She has had, or thinks ſhe has, a great paſſion, and ſhe certainly will not ſettle in this ſolitude: but if ſhe be a learned and ſenſible woman of forty, free from vanity, we may the more agreeably enjoy her ſociety and

talents." Sainville was ſtill ſpeaking, when Roger entered the apartment, and addreſſing his maſter, ſaid, "Your nurſe's two grand-children are juſt come, and have brought you a preſent from their grandmother."—"My nurſe!" interrupted Sainville. "I thought the good old woman was not alive."—"Oh!" ſaid Roger, "indeed ſhe is very infirm: a rheumatiſm, which has afflicted her theſe four months, prevents her from coming herſelf to pay her reſpects to your lordſhip."—"Does ſhe live in the village?"—"No, ſhe lives about a league and a half from this place."—"I hope that ſhe not only wants for nothing, but is in eaſy circumſtances."—"She has experienced ſeveral misfortunes theſe ſix months paſt. Her only daughter, the foſter-ſiſter of the marquis, who was a widow, died laſt winter, and left five orphans, who are now under the protection of their grandmother. I think ſhe has great need of aſſiſtance."—

"You

"You ought, then," replied Sainville ſharply, "to have immediately written and informed me of it."—"I wrote to your ſteward, who returned me no anſwer. But will my lord permit the children to ſee him?"—"I am going to hunt," anſwered Sainville: "I ſhall ſee them as I paſs." At theſe words Sainville went out with the baron; and going through the apartments, they perceived, in an anti-chamber, the two girls, when Roger made them advance. One was ſeventeen years old, and the other a child of ſix. The handſome perſon of the young country girl at once wholly attracted Sainville's attention. She held a baſket, filled with vegetables, fruits, and freſh eggs: ſhe approached with a timid and confuſed air, and with a trembling hand and bluſhing countenance preſented her offering. Sainville gazed upon her with kindneſs; when the little girl, who held ſome flowers, cried out, "Here, my godfather, here is a noſe-gay!"

gay!"—"O! the delightful little creature!" ſaid the baron; "look how pretty ſhe is!" Saying theſe words, the baron took her up in his arms. "Am I really her godfather?" aſked Sainville. "Yes, ſir," anſwered Roger. "I wrote, requeſting your permiſſion to name her after you, and I myſelf had the honour of repreſenting you at her chriſtening."—"That is the reaſon," ſaid the little girl, "why I am called Louiſa Georgina."—"Well, Georgina," ſaid Sainville, embracing her, "you are a charming creature! And you," ſaid he to the young country girl, "what is your name?"—"Jane, at your ſervice."—"Go, Jane, to your grandmother, and tell her that I will come and ſee her." Jane then curtſied, and went away. When ſhe had left the room, Sainville took Roger aſide, and gave him twenty-five guineas, with orders to ſend them immediately to his nurſe. After having fulfilled

this duty, he ſet out with the baron for the chace.

The two following days paſſed without any remarkable event. Sainville and his friend took long walks in the fields and in the woods, without meeting Conſtance. Mr. Renaud was more fortunate. He ſaid that he had found her upon a mountain, about half a league from the village, but could not then enter into converſation with her, becauſe ſhe ſoon left him. He added, that ſhe was walking with a child, of whom ſhe appeared to be the mother, becauſe he heard her ſeveral times call her *mamma*. This diſcovery gave riſe to freſh information, and they learned that ſhe really had for ſome days a child at her houſe: but nothing elſe could be known. Roger having told the baron that Conſtance went every feaſt-day to the pariſh to hear high maſs, which was celebrated at ſeven o'clock in the morning, the baron engaged

gaged Sainville to go to the church with him the following day, being Sunday. The two friends arrived in the church the ſame moment when Conſtance entered it. She had no hat on, but a black veil, which covered her face, and a black cloak entirely hid her ſhape. A ſervant followed, and ſhe had no child with her. Sainville and the baron bowed to her; and being near the holy water pot, Sainville, in a reſpectful manner, offered her ſome holy water. Conſtance profoundly curtſied; and pulling off her glove to take it, diſcovered an exceeding beautiful hand and arm. Juſt at that moment the curate and clergyman approaching Sainville, to pay him the honours granted to the lords of the pariſh, Conſtance retired, while Sainville's eyes followed her: but ſhe was loſt in the crowd. Sainville, being conducted to his ſeat, heard maſs with much perturbation; and he looked for Conſtance, but could not find her, as ſhe was ſeated at the other

extremity

extremity of the church. The baron, even more confuſed than his friend, obſerved, upon a ſeat at a little diſtance from him, Conſtance's valet, when, under pretext of going to ſpeak to Roger, he quitted the marquis's ſeat, and after walking about in the church, at laſt ſat down near the ſervant of Conſtance. As he had been told that his name was Thomſon, he readily conceived from what country he came, and ſpoke Engliſh to him. He was not miſtaken, for Thomſon anſwered him; but in ſuch a laconic and unfriendly manner, that he could obtain no new information, except that Conſtance was an Engliſh lady. After maſs, the two friends waited a conſiderable time near the front gate of the church, in hopes of ſeeing Conſtance, but ſhe had gone out by a little back door, and they did not meet her again.

Some urgent affairs obliging Sainville to paſs two days at Limoux, he ſet out that night with the baron. Upon the road,

Conſtance

Conſtance was frequently the ſubject of converſation. "You will allow," ſaid the baron, "that a woman of forty has not commonly ſuch a hand and arm as her's?" "Yes, I now begin to think ſhe is young, and I ſuppoſe ſhe is an unfortunate creature, who has been ſeduced and abandoned, together with her infant, and been obliged, through ſhame and grief, to come here and conceal herſelf. Theſe adventures are very common in England, where young girls enjoy a liberty which expoſes them to ſo many dangers."—"But to return to our heroine. Now that you allow her to be young, are you ſtill ſo obſtinate as to refuſe admitting ſhe is beautiful?"—"O! more than ever; for ſhe readily ſhewed her charming hand, and conſtantly hid her face."—"For my part, I think her as beautiful as an angel."—"I do not doubt it; for your imagination repreſents objects to ſuch advantage! I dare ſay that you have already compoſed an admirable

romance

romance upon this ſtranger, and therefore ſhe muſt be handſome. But the plan will not be very new: a young girl, ſeduced and deceived, flying, with the fruit of her love, from an irritated family, coming to hide herſelf for ſome months in a farm, and afterwards, being tired with ſolitude, mixing and conſoling herſelf with the world again. There is the whole romance, and it appears to me inſipid enough."—"But you have compoſed the cataſtrophe of it. Who has told you that our ſtranger will leave her cottage, and be conſoled?"—"I am well acquainted with women. To them, violent expedients never preſent any difficulties; they determine upon and renounce them with equal facility. They weep, they faint; you ſee them dead, and immediately come to life again; they go from one extreme to the other; from love to hatred, from timidity to boldneſs, from modeſty to impudence, and from miſanthropy to diſſipation. They have been

too

too much accuſed of falſeneſs, becauſe their unevenneſs and inconſtancy of diſpoſition are often attributed to diſſimulation and hypocriſy: they openly quit and reſume paſſion, vices, and virtues; and to an exquiſite delicacy they owe a livelineſs of ſenſations, which has entire dominion over them, and gives them an equal propenſity to good and evil. When guided by the greateſt prudence, a ſlight incident may occaſion a fit of madneſs, and in the midſt of their errors the enthuſiaſm of virtue may ſeize them. Madame de **** loved me paſſionately: when we were together at the midnight maſs, the majeſty of the place, the harmonious ſounds of the organ, and the beauty of the muſic, produced ſuch an effect upon her, that, after going out of the church, ſhe entered a convent, where ſhe lived three years the life of a ſaint. This woman, at three quarters paſt eleven o'clock, was entirely devoted to love, and at midnight ſhe ſacrificed to God

God her paſſion, her lover, and the world. Such is the character of women; and even thoſe are the moſt intereſting who are ingenuous and ſenſible: ſeducing and capricious beings, who owe their greateſt charms to their defects—to that facility of ſentiment, which gives to their features ſo much expreſſion and mobility, and to their manners ſuch a ſtriking variety! Dangerous ſex! which it is impoſſible to love with ſafety, and to eſteem and deſpiſe with juſtice, becauſe it is equally capable of the moſt inconceivable errors and the moſt ſublime actions."—"This ſatire upon women," ſaid the baron, ſmiling, "pleaſes me more than thoſe you uſually make; at leaſt it is of another kind; and I do not find in it that diſdainful indifference, which is ſtill more inſulting than anger itſelf."—"Anger ſuppoſes reſentment," replied Sainville, "and I have none. I argue with the greateſt impartiality; I judge women without caprice, becauſe I ſee them diſpaſſionately;

paſſionately; and believe, that when we ſpeak of them with juſtice, paſſion is radically cured." The two friends, diſcourſing in this manner, arrived at Limoux, and were next day invited to a grand dinner, where there were more than thirty people. During dinner, the converſation fell upon Conſtance, and each, upon this ſubject, made a ſtory more or leſs probable, and all nearly equally injurious; for in every country, perſons who devote themſelves to ſolitude, and who will neither make nor receive viſits, are reviled and calumniated by curious and idle people; and this claſs is the moſt numerous: the others are ſilent, liſtening to what is ſaid, and always receive unfavourable impreſſions. So are treated thoſe who, free from ambition, and deſirous of peace, fly from ſociety; whilſt intriguers are never without partiſans and protectors. However the baron, with ſome warmth, argued in favour of Conſtance; when a lady of the company, who

was

was the handſomeſt in Limoux, poſitively aſſerted that the adventurer (the epithet by which ſhe called the ſtranger) was an Iriſh waiting-woman, who, after having robbed her miſtreſs, had ſought refuge in Languedoc. Sainville laughed very much at this ſtory, which conſiderably diſconcerted the lady, who had an ardent deſire to pleaſe a man of the court, a *great lord*, who was young, witty, and handſome. The reſentment ſhe felt inſpired her with ſuch anger againſt the ſtranger, that ſhe whiſpered to the perſon ſitting next to her, that this *adventurer* had not only committed a robbery, but even a murder, by twice ſtabbing her miſtreſs with a knife, which cauſed her immediate death. During this converſation, an old gentleman, dreſſed in black, ſat down near the baron, kept the moſt profound ſilence, and continued eating. Suddenly the maſter of the houſe addreſſed him, ſaying, "Doctor, you can, better than any one here, ſpeak upon this ſubject;

ſubject; for (if I am not miſtaken) you attended the ſtranger."—"Yes, ſir," anſwered the doctor, "but I do not ſpeak of her, ſince I know that people make me ſay quite the contrary to what I have related."—"No matter," replied Sainville; "we cannot too often repeat the truth."—"Well, marquis, I had the honour of attending this lady in a ſerious illneſs about ten months ago. She told me that ſhe was twenty-four years old: I ſhould have ſuppoſed her only eighteen; and ſhe appeared to me to be the handſomeſt woman I ever ſaw; and certainly no one could be more reſpectable, for nothing can equal her mildneſs, goodneſs, and modeſty. I have had the pleaſure of meeting her ſeveral times ſince her convaleſcence, always at the houſes of poor people whom ſhe was taking care of, conſoling, and relieving their diſtreſs." This diſcourſe affected Sainville, and tranſported the baron. Some of the company, whoſe viſits Con-

ſtance had refuſed, ſcornfully ſmiled, and ſhewed extreme incredulity; while others, leſs intereſted, ſuſpended their judgment: for it was neceſſary to paſs from contempt to admiration, in a matter upon which we cannot raſhly determine; and as to the lady of Limoux, ſhe ſuffered extremely, and could not help ſaying very loud, that the doctor was a viſionary and an old dotard. "Doctor," ſaid Sainville, "ſince you have given us ſuch an account of this unknown lady, I am not ſurpriſed that ſhe has ſo many enemies. A recital of this kind ſhould excite envy, and conſequently much malice and abſurd calumny." As he had done ſpeaking, they roſe from table, and about an hour after the two friends returned again to L****. On the road, they talked of nothing but Conſtance, when Sainville always ſpoke of her with indifference: but he added, that he was irritated at the calumnies raiſed againſt her, and that therefore he was determined to

pay

pay her a visit that very day. "Perhaps she will not receive us," continued he; "no matter; we shall have fulfilled a duty, by shewing a mark of consideration and respect to a person so interesting and peaceable, whom hatred and envy try to denigrate."

In reality, Sainville, upon approaching the village, orders his people to stop before the house of Constance; they draw near, and the man on horseback, who precedes the carriage, dismounts, knocks at the door, and calls out loudly for the servant, who runs to him. The footman told her, "Here is the marquis come to visit your mistress: please go and inform her." The servant, quite confused, went into the house, and in a moment after returned, and without any preamble said that her mistress could see no one. The valet, being irritated at such a want of respect towards *the marquis*, was going to

anſwer in an angry manner, when Sainville, in a ſharp tone, and with an air of indifference, ordered him to be ſilent, and return to the caſtle. The baron was grieved; his curioſity was excited to the higheſt pitch, and he did not conceal it; while Sainville, aſhamed of experiencing the ſame ſentiment, endeavoured to diſſemble it. Moreover he was at heart very much piqued to ſee himſelf treated by Conſtance in the ſame manner as his neighbours and the inhabitants of Limoux. This taſte for profound ſolitude, which at firſt intereſted him, now appeared to him only a *ridiculous antipathy* for ſociety. "This ſtranger may be intereſting, but I am certain ſhe is wanting of *education*." —"I do not doubt but the ſervant was charged with ſome compliment, which ſhe has not delivered; ſhe has only bluntly told the meſſage, without repeating the expreſſions."—"However," replied Sainville, ſmiling,

ſmiling, "that is quite indifferent to me." After having ſpoken theſe words, they talked of other things.

Upon arriving at the caſtle, the baron could not queſtion Roger, who had taken advantage of his maſter's abſence, by going to a fair which was held ſome leagues from the village. Mr. Renaud, being profoundly occupied in his buſineſs, and in the ſtudy of botany, paid no attention to what was going forward around him. He was neither obſerving nor curious; and when he was interrogated upon events he ought to have known, or even relating to things he had witneſſed, he generally gave only theſe two anſwers: *I have not inquired about it*; or *I did not pay any attention to it.* He was by no means ſuſceptible of any paſſion, (except that of ſtudy,) neither did he conceive them in others: he paid as little attention to effects as he comprehended their cauſes: he thought matrimony a mere aſſociation of intereſt, and

love only an idle amuſement. Although he was kind, he never experienced compaſſion but for phyſical evils: others eſcaped his penetration, or only appeared to him defects of organization and folly. The baron heard nothing new from him about Conſtance, which made him out of humour: but that being the day when the poſt went out, he conſoled himſelf by writing all the evening.

The next morning the two friends went to take a walk in a charming wood, about three quarters of a mile from the caſtle. This wood was entirely decked with a young verdure, ſtrewed with lilies and violets. The ground was unequal, and they found ſome rocks covered with moſs, and ſeveral ſprings of pure water, forming an infinite number of ſtreamlets interſecting each other. Upon entering a narrow avenue of young trees which formed an arbour, Sainville perceived, about fifty paces off, a woman ſitting upon a rock.

He

He ſtopped; and recollecting Conſtance, or rather being certain that it was her, he pointed her to his friend, making a ſign to be ſilent. She was ſitting with her back to them, with a child by her ſide. She had a hat on, the veil of which hid her neck, but left to view the moſt beautiful head of hair and the moſt perfect ſhape in the world. After having for ſome moments gazed at her, the two friends advance ſoftly and ſilently. When they were very near her, Conſtance, who was attentively reading, looked around, and perceived them through her thick veil, when ſhe ſtarted with ſurpriſe, and roſe up. At that moment the child, who was playing with flowers, raiſed her head, and looking at Sainville, cried out, "*Ah! it is my godfader!*" Sainville caſt his eyes upon her, and recollected, with extreme aſtoniſhment, Georgina, his nurſe's grandchild. The child ran holding out her arms to him, when Sainville took her up; and addreſſing

dreſſing himſelf to Conſtance, with emotion ſtammered a compliment, of which ſhe only heard the laſt phraſe, entreating her to ſit down. "Yes, yes, mamma," ſaid Georgina, "*you ſitty down*, and my godfader too." At theſe words Conſtance ſat down again. Sainville then embraced Georgina, and alſo ſat upon the rock, ſtill holding the child upon his knee. The baron was ſtanding; and Conſtance, ſpreading the ſkirt of her gown upon the ſide oppoſite to Sainville, appeared to offer him a place, which he eagerly accepted. They kept a moment's ſilence, which Georgina broke by this queſtion, addreſſed to Sainville: "*Godfader, you 'ike mamma vedy muſh, don't you?*"—"Charming child!" anſwered Sainville: "you ſuppoſe that every one, like you, can freely deliver their ſentiments! But, madam," continued he, inclining towards Conſtance, "may I preſume to aſk if you have been made acquainted with our deſire of having

the

the honour of ſeeing you?"—"I beſeech you," replied Conſtance, "to receive, upon that head, all my excuſes; for my health, my ſituation, and the kind of life to which I have devoted myſelf, do not permit me to enjoy an honour, of which I am, however, very ſenſible; and I am charmed that chance has preſented me with an opportunity of expreſſing to you all my regrets." Theſe words were delivered in ſuch an enchanting tone, that Sainville felt himſelf perplexed. The baron was going to ſpeak, but Georgina prevented him by ſaying, "O, mamma! you cannot refuſe my godfader: and beſides, he is our lord." Here Sainville again embraced the child, and replied, "At leaſt, madam, allow me to teſtify my gratitude to you for your kindneſs to this child."—"I ought not to have taken her under my care," replied Conſtance, "without your permiſſion: but I had obtained that of her grandmother a long time before your ar-

rival here. May I flatter myſelf, ſir, that you will approve my deſign of educating and adopting her?" At theſe words, the child, terrified at a queſtion which ſuppoſed a doubt, threw herſelf into the arms of Conſtance, crying and ſaying, that nothing could make her leave her mamma. Conſtance, being affected, preſſed her tenderly to her boſom, when the child accidentally raiſed Conſtance's veil, and diſcovered an alabaſter neck which ſo much fixed the attention of Sainville, that he forgot to give an anſwer. The baron, who had hitherto no opportunity of ſaying a word during this converſation, haſtened to ſpeak and expreſs what Sainville ought to have anſwered; when the latter, in a faltering voice, confirmed by a ſolemn promiſe what the baron ſaid. Georgina recompenſed him by the moſt tender careſſes, and Conſtance thanked him in a feeling manner. Sainville, troubled and embarraſſed by the extreme tenderneſs which he experienced,

roſe up, took leave of the intereſting ſtranger, and went away. The baron followed him with regret, for he wiſhed very much to prolong ſuch a converſation. Sainville walked on haſtily, without ſpeaking a word; and the baron looking at him, O-ho!" ſaid he, "notwithſtanding your inſenſibility, you have ſhed tears. I ſee two ſtill upon your cheek."—"Well," replied Sainville, "it was that dear child who bathed my face with tears." In ſaying theſe words, he pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, wiped his cheeks, and particularly his eyes, which were ſtill moiſt. "Moreover," continued he, "I do not deny having been affected by this ſingular ſcene."—"That is, then, the child," interrupted the baron, "whom we ſuppoſed to be the fruit of a clandeſtine love?"—"All this is inconceivable," replied Sainville, and ſaid no more. The baron, reſuming the diſcourſe, extravagantly praiſed the ſtranger; while Sainville, to hide his

extreme agitation and embarraſſment, affected a compoſed countenance. Upon arriving at the caſtle, they found Roger returned. The poſt had juſt come in, and the baron received an enormous packet of letters, when he went into his room to read them at his leiſure. Sainville received two letters, the ſuperſcription of which he recollected, put them in his pocket without opening them, and went into an inner yard which led to the ſtables, where he ordered a horſe to be ſaddled, and ſet off immediately, without permitting any one to follow him. He went to the village where his nurſe lived. The good woman was tranſported with joy at the ſight of him. She was ſtill confined to bed with the rheumatiſm. Sainville, who generally ſhewed little outward demonſtrations of ſenſibility, teſtified his affection by a thouſand careſſes, and haſtened to juſtify himſelf for not having aſſiſted her when ſhe loſt her daughter, and was obliged to take charge

charge of all her grandchildren; and alſo complained bitterly of the negligence of his ſteward. At this diſcourſe the nurſe wept with affection and gratitude. She anſwered that ſhe had really experienced great misfortunes, but that heaven had juſt then ſent *an angel to her aid.* At theſe words Sainville conceived that ſhe was ſpeaking of Conſtance: he was very attentive to what ſhe ſaid; and the old woman related that Conſtance, having come to walk in the village, had learnt her diſtreſs, and brought a phyſician along with her. "That is not all," continued the good woman: "ſhe comes to ſee me every week, bringing ſometimes money, at others linen, broth, and ſyrups. She has put one of my little boys to ſchool, and pays for him. When ſhe came, ſhe uſually ſtopped two or three hours in the cottage, brought her work along with her, and worked with Jane: ſhe taught her a great many fine works, and then ſhe ſaid, 'Jane,

you

you muſt, in your turn, give me a leſſon. Teach me to ſpin:' then ſhe took the ſpindle and ſpan, all the while ſinging hymns. She had ſcarcely entered, when all the children ran round her, ſhe having her pockets full of cakes and playthings: but ſhe liked Georgina better than the others, and cloathed Jane as well as her. In ſhort, about two months ago ſhe aſked me to let her have Georgina, that ſhe might make a young lady of her. I conſented to it. She let her remain with me till her lodging was prepared, which was not ready till the day that I ſent Jane and Georgina to the caſtle, and that very day Georgina remained with the good lady."—"But tell me," replied Sainville, "when that virtuous lady was here, had ſhe always her face covered?"—"O, no! ſhe took off her hat to work."—"And is ſhe young?"—"Her face is like a child's."—"Has ſhe not black eyes?"—"No, they are blue, like thoſe of Jane, only larger; her eyebrows

brows are brown, and she has fair hair. O, what a pity it is that she has her mob always over her face! but it is because there is no sun in her country, and she is so much afraid of ours."—"You say her eyes are the colour of Jane's, but I wager she has not such pretty teeth."—"O! I beg your pardon; it is quite the contrary: her teeth are much whiter, and as shining as a glass."—"She is, then, very handsome?"—"O! handsome as an angel! and so charitable and God-fearing! She speaks so mildly!"—"I am charmed, my good mother, to see you so sensible of the beneficence and virtues of this respectable lady. I will contribute, as well as her, to make your life comfortable."—"O, my good lord! I have nothing more to desire; I have seen you, and you have sent me so much money——"—"When the good lady comes to see you, does she send you previous notice of it?"—"Now that I am in better health, and do not want any thing,

thing, ſhe does not come ſo often. It is about two weeks ſince I ſaw her, but ſhe ſent word to me that ſhe will come on Saturday, with Georgina."—"On Saturday? In four days hence? Adieu, my dear Magdalen! I ſhall ſend you, to-morrow, many little things you ſtand in need of, and I ſhall come to ſee you again next week:"—"If you could come on Saturday, the good lady would be here, and——"—"No, ſhe does not like to be ſeen, and only comes here on your account. We ought to reſpect her wiſhes." After this diſcourſe Sainville left his nurſe, and quickly returned to the caſtle, called to Roger, to whom he in private gave ſome orders relative to Magdalen, deſiring him to mention it to no perſon whatever, and he afterwards ſat down to table with the baron. The latter ſpoke a great deal about ſome letters he had received from Paris, when Sainville liſtened to him with more complaiſance than uſual; and far

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from ridiculing the three or four women who wrote to him, he praiſed them, eſpecially Madame de Flamigny, whoſe lover he had formerly been, and who was actually the baron's miſtreſs. After dinner, Mr. Renaud and the baron began to play at cheſs. Sainville was muſing in the park. That day appeared to him to glide over rapidly: he was himſelf aſtoniſhed at it; and ſaid at night, going to bed, "I cannot conceive the reaſon that time has not appeared tedious to me to-day." He ſlept little, and awoke early. The baron entered his chamber as he finiſhed dreſſing himſelf. "I come," ſaid he, "to inform you of my good fortune. I have found and ſeized the opportunity of doing ſomething that will pleaſe Conſtance. I heard this morning, from Robert, who had juſt left her, that little Georgina had entirely ſpoiled a large book of painted flowers and *herbages*, as Robert called it, of which Conſtance was extremely fond. I then entreated

treated Mr. Renaud to give me his engraved herbal, which is very beautiful, and I immediately ſent it to Conſtance."—"Very well," replied Sainville, with a forced ſmile; "you ſhould deſire me to be ſilent on this matter, elſe I ſhall inform Madame de Flamigny of all this gallantry."—"O, I have myſelf made mention to her of this ſtranger. My laſt letter contains four pages of particulars concerning her."—"I only jeſt," replied Sainville. "I know, my dear Verceil, that Madame de Flamigny has too much confidence in you to be jealous; and I really think that you will not be tempted to renounce a perfect, handſome, and very amiable woman, for a perſon with whom you are not acquainted, and who, to all appearance, is herſelf otherwiſe engaged." The baron made no reply. They ſet out a hunting, but were ſoon tired, and about two hours after returned to the caſtle. The baron finding Robert in the yard, wiſhed much

much to ſpeak to him privately, but he could not get rid of Sainville. Robert, who had carried the herbal, in the name of Conſtance returned him many thanks; alſo adding, that ſhe would not keep it, but would inſpect and return it in a few days. From the manner in which Robert delivered the meſſage, Sainville doubted not the baron had ſent a note along with the herbal. "You have, then, written to her?" aſked he, ironically. "Certainly," anſwered the baron, bluſhing; "and I told you ſo."—"I did not hear it," replied Sainville. At that moment a coach and ſix horſes entering the yard, put an end to this converſation. It was the Intendant of the province, who came to pay a viſit to Sainville. They ſoon ſat down to table; and after dinner the Intendant begged Sainville to go into his ſtudy, as he wiſhed to converſe with him in private. When they were alone, the Intendant began to ſpeak, and ſaid, "I wiſh to obtain ſome inform-

information reſpecting the ſtranger who has taken up her abode in this place."—"What have you heard about her?"—"O, a thouſand extraordinary things. Among others, that ſhe is paid by the Engliſh government to act here as a ſpy."—"A ſpy?"—"Yes. This ſuſpicion proceeds from the extreme curioſity ſhe has ſhewn reſpecting our manufactures, in all the towns ſhe has paſſed through. It is aſſerted that ſhe takes down notes of every thing ſhe ſees; and this particularity, joined to the myſteriouſneſs of her conduct, renders her ſuſpicious to ſuch a degree, that the miniſter has written to me to make inquiry about her."—"What, has her name already reached ſo far as Verſailles?"—"They have ſuch an odd portrait of her, that if we were at war with the Engliſh, we ſhould have already ſecured her by a *lettre de cachet*."—"What! put a young perſon into the Baſtille, becauſe ſhe loves the arts and ſolitude! It would certainly

tainly be a very prudent action in the time of war: but as we enjoy perfect peace, what have we to fear?"—"But at all times the ſecrets of our manufactures are of great importance to our commerce." The Intendant, who was full of pedantry and had very little wit, delivered theſe words in ſuch a fooliſh and ſelf-ſufficient manner, that Sainville, already impatient, could not help ſmiling with the utmoſt contempt. "Sir," ſaid he to him, "you may quiet the miniſter's fears, by writing to him, that this foreign lady is extremely reſpectable, notwithſtanding her taſte for manufactures and retirement; and that I paſs my word for her, although I have not the honour of perſonally knowing her, as ſhe has refuſed my viſits: but I know who ſhe is; and I can aſſure you there is not a woman who is more entitled to the protection of government, and the eſteem of well-thinking people." Sainville, to preſerve Conſtance from an abſurd and ridiculous

culous perſecution, made up a ſtory by ſaying that ſhe was no ſtranger to him: but his jeering and diſdainful tone excited the Intendant's anger ſo much, that it did not give him a more favourable opinion of Conſtance, and, on the contrary, changed it from ſlight prejudices into averſion. It is a very great art to defend people who intereſt us; for a condemnable weakneſs and a too great ſeverity are equally dangerous. Some cowardly abandon thoſe whom they ſeem to protect, while others take up their defence with an inſulting ardour, which can only irritate, and produces hatred. The Intendant therefore wrote to Paris, that Conſtance was an adventurer and an intriguer, but that Sainville protected her on account of his being her lover.

Sainville related this interview to the baron, who was very much irritated at what had paſſed, and at the ſame time inſiſted that Sainville ought to inform Conſtance

ſtance of this event; when it was determined that Sainville ſhould write to her upon the ſubject.

An hour before ſupper the baron came and told his friend that he had made a charming diſcovery. "Conſtance," continued he, "often walks upon the terrace at night, between twelve and one o'clock. Several peaſants, returning late from the neighbouring fairs, have ſeen her at moonlight, when ſhe had no veil on: I therefore propoſe to you, if it ſhould be fine to-night, to go together ſoftly to the bottom of the terrace. Perhaps by this means we may ſee her; and I confeſs I feel the greateſt curioſity upon this conſideration." —"As you pleaſe," replied Sainville coolly. "I will accompany you willingly."

They ſupped, as uſual, at nine o'clock, when they eat and ſpoke little. After ſupper they went into the hall, and the windows being open, they looked out ſeveral

veral times to ſee if the weather was clear and ſerene. At length they ſet out preciſely at eleven o'clock, and arrived at the houſe of Conſtance: but to no purpoſe, as ſhe did not come out to walk; and they returned ſorrowfully to the caſtle at two o'clock in the morning. Next day they determined to attempt it again, and the night was ſo fine, that the hope of ſeeing Conſtance appeared better founded. That idea cauſed ſuch an emotion in them, that it was taken for a preſentiment. The baron was agitated; Sainville experienced an extreme perturbation. They ſilently approached the terrace with precaution, and hid themſelves behind the hawthorn hedge. The ſky was clear and ſerene; the moon ſpread a light as pleaſing as enlivening; the air was impregnated with the perfume of the rural flowers which decorated the terrace: in ſhort, this myſterious and ſolitary aſylum at that time united all that could ſeduce the imagination and charm

charm the ſenſes. After ſome moments of profound ſilence the two friends heard a perſon walking near them, who ſat down, ſighed, articulated ſome words in a feeble voice, but which was known, and was afterwards ſilent. The two friends, motionleſs and retaining their breath, liſtened with eager attention. In a few minutes the ſame voice was heard in more diſtinct and ſweet ſounds. She ſang a tender and ſlow air, with Engliſh words. Sainville, although quite vexed that he could not underſtand them, was, however, conſoled by the expreſſion of the muſic, which ſeemed to interpret their meaning. He did not know which to prefer—the affecting accents which penetrated to the bottom of his heart, or the taſte and art which directed them. The voice was ſilent, but Sainville ſtill liſtened. A ſigh was again heard, when Sainville ſtarted. His heart felt the ſame ſympathetic emotion with that tender ſoul which appeared to ſuffer; he ex-

perienced and deeply felt all the affections that his imagination ſuggeſted. However, the baron riſing up a little, and moving the foliage, takes Sainville by the arm, who, knowing his deſign, ſeconds it: both gently bend a branch, and, without being perceived, they could at laſt ſee upon the terrace and diſcover the object of ſuch lively curioſity. Conſtance preſented herſelf to their view without hat or veil. She was ſeated upon a plot of graſs, in ſuch a ſituation that they could only ſee her profile: but this poſture ſhewed to greater advantage, on the firſt glance, the perfect regularity of her face and ſhape. As it was exceedingly warm, her neck and hands were uncovered. The ſilver light of the moon ſtill added to the dazzling ſplendour of her fair complexion. With her mouth half open, and her eyes raiſed towards heaven, Conſtance contemplated that planet which favours myſtery and melancholy. In this attitude, her enchanting

counte-

countenance at once expreſſed tenderneſs and ſerenity. This celeſtial figure made upon the heart of Sainville an impreſſion as deep as rapid: ſhe not only made him loſe the recollection of every other idea, but ſhe baniſhed for ever from his imagination the remembrance of all that he had admired. It was to him a ſingular and new object, for he believed he ſaw a handſome woman for the firſt time in his life.

Enchained and fixed by ſurprize and admiration, he could not quit this dangerous contemplation: but at laſt Conſtance, ſuddenly awaking from her reverie, roſe up, walked to her houſe, and diſappeared. Sainville, ſeeing her no more, ſtill ſought her, and continually kept looking upon the ſeat ſhe had juſt left: but the baron pulling him by the arm, he was obliged to return to the caſtle. While they were on their way thither, Sainville did not ſpak but to aſk his friend the ſignification of the words which Conſtance had ſung; when

the baron anſwered, that they expreſſed the charms of ſolitude and the dangers of love. The baron made many obſervations and formed a thouſand conjectures upon this ſubject: he wanted to deliver his ſentiments, and to ſpeak of Conſtance; while Sainville, on the contrary, could not utter a ſingle word, and only wiſhed to be alone. He had ſcarcely entered his chamber, when he ſent his attendants away, and falling into an arm-chair, "Is it poſſible?" ſaid he. "It is only an illuſion.—No; I love her, or rather my heart tells me I ſhall love her with idolatry. But ſhe loves another object; every thing declares it. She is perhaps married. What does that ſignify?—Whatever power reaſon may have over her ſentiments, this angelic creature is a woman—ſhe can be ſeduced! I muſt, then, baniſh this ſtupid ſupineneſs which overcomes me. I ſhall form projects: I ſhall have a predominant idea. But, ah! ſhould I experience the torment

of

of an unfortunate paſſion! At leaſt then I I ſhall exiſt. Any thing is preferable to nonentity, and hope alleviates all evils."

Sainville, buried in theſe reflexions, paſſed a great part of the night walking in his room, calling to mind the image of Conſtance, and meditating the plan of his conduct towards her. He did not go to bed till five o'clock in the morning, and roſe before ten, with an intention of writing to Conſtance, according to the baron's advice: but wiſhing to compoſe a letter at once ſimple, intereſting, and witty, which he could ſhew to his friend, he wrote half a dozen of them, all of which he tore in pieces. He ſucceeded no better in the afternoon; and the baron aſking him, in the evening, if he had written the letter, he pretended that he had forgotten it, and added, that he would do it the following day; which he accordingly did. The letter, having been communicated to the baron, was ſent to Conſtance; and two hours after, the meſ-

ſenger returned with a written anſwer, which Sainville received with inexpreſſible emotion. He opened it, ſaw a beautiful hand, and read the following lines:

Anſwer from CONSTANCE *to the Marquis of* SAINVILLE.

'I am infinitely ſenſible, ſir, of the proofs 'of eſteem with which you are ſo kind 'to honour me; and my gratitude obliges 'me to anſwer you with a frankneſs that 'will undoubtedly ſubvert the prejudices 'which curioſity and my apparent myſ-'terious conduct have given riſe to. 'My diſpoſition is ſingular; I am un-'ſociable; I hate ſociety. In this my 'ſingularity conſiſts. I conceal myſelf 'rather from caprice than for any par-'ticular reaſon; yet I could, without any 'fear of being remarked, frequent ſociety. 'My deſire for tranquillity, and not any 'extraordinary events, has led me to this 'retreat, where I wiſh to live; and, de-

'voting

'voting myſelf to obſcurity, I have choſen 'the only ſituation which ſuits me. I 'ſhall even confeſs, that one of the mo- 'tives which determined me to ſelect this 'place for an aſylum was the opinion ge- 'nerally entertained, that he to whom it 'belongs would never come to it.

'As to the calumnies ſpread againſt me, 'they can neither cauſe affliction nor even 'uneaſineſs to me. I am perfectly indif- 'ferent about the opinion that may be 'conceived of me, and your generous pro- 'tection ſhelters me from an unjuſt perſe- 'cution.

'Pardon me, ſir, for having thus ſo far 'intruded upon you: but on account of 'the intereſt which you and the baron of 'Verceil have ſo condeſcendingly taken in 'my favour, I felt it my duty to mention 'the above particulars.'

"Well, my dear marquis," exclaimed the baron, after having read the letter,

"what do you think of ſuch an anſwer? Does it not raiſe your aſtoniſhment to the higheſt pitch? Do you not find in it all that can characteriſe the moſt ſingular perſon, and the leaſt fitted for the mode of life ſhe has choſen?"—"You know," anſwered Sainville, "that in general I have not a very favourable opinion of women, I have diſcovered in their conduct ſo much intrigue, artifice, and coquetry: but this one, I confeſs, confounds all my ideas. One ſo handſome and ſo young, voluntarily to ſacrifice herſelf to oblivion! She is ignorant that we have ſeen her, and endeavours to hide her charms to perſuade us that ſhe is only an ordinary perſon; and ſhe ardently wiſhes to deſtroy a prejudice which vexes and diſpleaſes her." Saying theſe words, Sainville again took up the letter, and after having read it over a ſecond time, "Yes," ſaid he, "this is ſurpriſing!"—"O!" replied the baron, "it is inconceivable! What a woman! What

What a nobleneſs in all her expreſſions! How ſhe exalts, by wiſhing to humble herſelf! What politeneſs, what mildneſs accompanies her miſanthropy!" Sainville added nothing more to this eulogium: he fell into a profound reverie; and recovering from it, he propoſed writing another letter to Conſtance, in the name of them both, to aſſure her they would reſpect her wiſhes and love for ſolitude, and would even renounce walking in the little wood, having obſerved, that ſince they had the happineſs of meeting her there, ſhe had not frequented it. This letter being approved by the baron, was immediately ſent. Conſtance returned no anſwer: ſhe only deſired the carpenter to give them her compliments and thanks, and that without ſeeing him; the meſſage was delivered by the ſervant, (as were all others,) a circumſtance which augmented their grief at not having received a written anſwer. The two friends then determined to go no

more at night to the bottom of the terrace; for they were ſenſible, that if Conſtance diſcovered ſuch a trick, they would entirely loſe her eſteem.

The next day was an important one to Sainville: it was Saturday, when Conſtance was expected at Magdalen's habitation. Let us now leave Sainville, reflecting upon what would be going forward there, and let us follow Conſtance into the cottage of Georgina's grandmother. She ſet out at two o'clock, with the child and the faithful Thomſon; and after croſſing a foreſt which led to the village of Magdalen, ſhe was very much ſurpriſed to find, inſtead of a rugged and ſtony road, a beaten path, perfectly ſmooth, with a great number of ſeats in different parts upon the road. She arrived at the old woman's at half paſt three o'clock; and in approaching the houſe, ſhe perceived that the walls were newly whitened. Jane, quite overjoyed, was waiting for her at the door, when

when ſhe enters, and finds the interior part of the cottage totally altered. She ſees nothing but new furniture, extremely plain and perfectly neat, and ſhe is informed that they were all given by *the marquis*. Magdalen being in better health, was ſitting up in an arm-chair; and the good woman, anticipating the queſtions Conſtance would make, began to relate all the particulars *of the marquis's kindneſs to her*. In the midſt of this recital, Jane, followed by a ſervant who was newly come to the houſe, went into an adjoining room, and returned, bringing with them a table covered with fruits, refreſhments, and ices. At this ſight Georgina was exceedingly pleaſed, and ſat down immediately to table, inviting Conſtance to follow her example. Magdalen and her grandchildren only kept up the converſation. Conſtance ſpoke but little, and was very penſive; and upon taking leave of Magdalen, the latter wiſhed to learn from her when ſhe ſhould have the

pleaſure of another viſit: but Conſtance did not inform her; ſhe only promiſed, in a vague manner, to come again.

In returning to L****, Conſtance more attentively examined the new road, which ſhe could no longer doubt had been made on her account; and although ſhe was not tired, ſhe ſat down three or four times (as if to pay honour to the utility of the ſeats). She returned to her houſe through the garden, and had ſcarcely entered, when Georgina with joy exclaimed, "Ah, mamma! look how many flowers! How fine and freſh they are!" Conſtance indeed ſaw a prodigious quantity of boxes and pots of the fineſt flowers, with which the garden and terrace had been decorated during her abſence. She called her ſervant, who immediately came and informed that *my lord the marquis* had ſent all theſe flowers *to his godchild*, at the ſame time delivering a letter to her from Sainville.

Conſtance

Conſtance haſtily enters her room, and ſhutting herſelf in, opens the packet, which contained a large piece of parchment, and a letter to the following purport:

'Madam,

'While you give me ſuch an example of 'the moſt ſublime beneficence, you cannot 'be ſurpriſed at my feeling a deſire of at 'leaſt fulfilling my duty. The happy 'child you have adopted is my godchild: 'you are become her mother, and I 'have, at her chriſtening, contracted to-'wards her the obligation of a father. 'This bond, which attaches me to her, is 'not leſs dear to my heart than ſacred in 'itſelf. Suffer me, therefore, madam, alſo 'to intereſt myſelf about her deſtiny, and 'deign to receive for her this contract, 'which I ſhould have ſooner ſent, but for 'the delay occaſioned by the law forms

'that

'that were judged neceſſary to ſecure the 'validity of it.'

Conſtance, after having read this letter, unfolded the parchment, and found it to be a contract in the uſual form, ſecuring to Georgina a thouſand crowns annually. Knowing her obligation of anſwering, Conſtance wrote a ſhort note, wherein ſhe acknowledged that Sainville had certainly every right to exerciſe his beneficence towards Georgina; but added, that the child having no need of a penſion during the courſe of her education, ſhe therefore wiſhed the contract to be depoſited in the hands of a notary, and that the money ſhould lie out at intereſt till Georgina ſhould be married. Conſtance having thus anſwered, put her note and the contract under cover; and after having called Georgina, ſhe deſired her to go herſelf to thank her godfather, and carry to him

the

the packet ſhe had juſt ſealed. Georgina, quite proud and delighted to receive ſuch a commiſſion, ſet out immediately along with the ſervant. Being arrived at the caſtle, ſhe aſks for her godfather, when Sainville runs and embraces the child, takes her by the hand, and leads her into his ſtudy. There, *tête-à-tête* with Georgina, he reads the anſwer two or three times over, when the child interrupted him to repeat her compliments, which he appeared not to have heard. Sainville takes her upon his knees, admires her engaging little ways, and with pleaſure remarks that her manners, although ſtill natural, are much more agreeable, and that ſhe ſpeaks infinitely better. "My dear Georgina," ſaid he to her, "what leſſons does your mamma give you?"—"She teaches me to read, and then to ſew, and then to count. Will you hear me count up to a hundred?"—"No, I like better to talk with you."—"O! it is with mamma I talk:

I talk: ſhe tells me ſuch pretty ſtories!" —" Do you love muſic?"—" O yes, when mamma ſings and plays upon the piano."—" Your mamma paints likewiſe?"—" Yes, little pictures no bigger than that. She painted her medallion."—" A medallion! That ſhe wears on her neck?"—" Yes, indeed."—" But how did you ſee it?"—" She always hides it under her handkerchief: but I have ſeen it, for all that."—" It repreſents a perſon?"—" Only a very little face, not larger than a nut, and yet there is every thing in it—the eyes, the noſe, the mouth." —" Is it the face of a woman?"—" No, it is the face of a beautiful young man."—" Of a young man?"—" O, he is ſo pretty! I always kiſs it when I ſee it; and mamma is ſo fond of it, that ſhe kiſſes it too." At theſe words Sainville, after remaining a moment without ſpeaking, again aſked a few queſtions of Georgina, who always anſwered with the ſame ingenuouſneſs;

nuouſneſs; and after having promiſed to ſend her ſome playthings, he gave her into the hands of the ſervant.

The next day Georgina received from her godfather the handſomeſt dolls made in Limoux, together with a large baſket full of pine-apples; and from that day Sainville found no opportunity of renewing theſe kind of attentions. Conſtance did not go to Magdalen's houſe, but ſhe was ſometimes ſeen walking at a great diſtance, when no one ventured to come near her.

She often walked in the little wood where Sainville had promiſed never to go. In ſhort, he in vain ſought ſome new method of recalling him to her mind, and of letting her know how much he was intereſted about her. However, far from being diſcouraged, he daily perſiſted in the deſign and deſire of triumphing over ſuch an uncommon haughtineſs. The extreme reſerve of Conſtance, and the certainty that ſhe loved another object, tended only to

increaſe

increaſe and inflame the paſſion of a man of his diſpoſition. An eaſy conqueſt could not have revived his heatt, but to ſeduce a woman ſo handſome, ſo romantic—a woman who diſcovered ſo much wit, ſingularity, and even ſuch attracting virtue and ſuperior reaſon, notwithſtanding her precautions, and undoubtedly oaths and love given to another, to aſtoniſh, ſoften, conquer, render her unfaithful, and become the ſole arbiter of her deſtiny—theſe were grand projects, and the difficulties and obſtacles they preſented were to him the moſt powerful attraction. His head and imagination being ſtrongly filled with this idea, Sainville recovered from his languor, and viſibly acquired a new exiſtence: he was no longer that indolent and diſdainful man whom nothing could agitate, and whom every thing fatigued: he had not that kind of perturbation occaſioned by the ſupineneſs of the heart, or that ſtupor, by which the uſe of the intellectual faculties

faculties is ſuſpended: he was often thoughtful when he ſhould have given an anſwer, but then it could be perceived that he was only abſent becauſe his mind was intenſely pre-occupied: he in general ſpoke more, and with leſs malignity. In ſhort, notwithſtanding his fears and inquietudes, the joy of having recovered his ſenſibility made him more chearful and agreeable; he employed himſelf with more activity, he read much, and particularly books upon botany.

As for the baron, he was not in his uſual ſtate of mind. Leſs agreeable, and not ſo even-tempered, he became dull, unſociable, and ſilent; his friendſhip for Sainville appeared to be diminiſhed; he frequently even ſhunned him; he walked quite alone, and made his appearance only at the time of hunting, and at the hours of repaſt. One day, when the baron was in the hall with Mr. Renaud, Roger brought a cheſt which had juſt arrived from Paris

Paris for Sainville, and laid it upon a table. The baron aſked what it was. "I ſee," anſwered Roger, "that it contains books; for the cheſt is quite broken, and its contents can be diſcovered."—"Let us ſee," ſaid Mr. Renaud: "they are certainly books upon chemiſtry, which we wanted, and which I begged the marquis to ſend for." Saying theſe words, he goes and looks into the cheſt. "Not at all," ſaid he, "they are only Engliſh books—a grammar, a dictionary, and ſome other volumes. Apparently the marquis wiſhes to learn Engliſh." The baron, who attentively liſtened to Mr. Renaud, frowned, and fell into a dull reverie. About a quarter of an hour afterwards Sainville came into the hall. "Here is a cheſt," ſaid the baron to him, "juſt arrived for you, in the ſtate you now ſee it, which has made us diſcover that you have an intention of privately learning the Engliſh language." At theſe words Sainville felt

felt himſelf extremely embarraſſed: but he had the preſence of mind to diſſemble it perfectly well. "What?" replied he. "I did not tell you that I had ordered theſe books? I certainly did not intend to make a myſtery of it, ſince I formed that idea only in the hope that you would give me leſſons."—"I give you leſſons upon the Engliſh language! That would be droll indeed!"—"O, do not *ſham modeſty*; you are very capable of teaching that language."—"Very well: but——"—"No *buts*, my dear baron. We ſhall make an exchange: I ſhall teach you Spaniſh, and——"—"Spaniſh! for what purpoſe?."—"Do you not intend to travel into Spain?"—"And undoubtedly you think of going to England?"—"How can a perſon, living with you, avoid having that deſire? You ſpeak of that country with ſo much enthuſiaſm! *The verdure and the women* are ſo beautiful there!"—"But nothing pleaſes you, nothing moves you.

you. Are you not inſenſible?"—"O," replied Saiville, ſmiling, "you have debated ſo much upon my inſenſibility, that, with due deference to your opinion, I begin not to believe it. Be that as it may, my dear Verceil, give me my firſt leſſon upon the Engliſh language." Saying theſe words, Sainville ſits down at the table, takes the grammar, and begins. Mr. Renaud aſked permiſſion to be preſent at the leſſons, that he might profit by them; "deſiring," ſaid he, "to be able to read the works of Sydenham and ſir Hans Sloane." Behold the baron ſet up for an Engliſh teacher, in ſpite of himſelf; Sainville, appearing not to perceive his bad humour, which the baron, thinking to conceal, endeavours to conquer, and gives the leſſon. After ſupper, Sainville brings ſome Spaniſh books, and obliges the baron, in his turn, to receive a leſſon; and it was determined that this ſtudy ſhould be continued every day, and it really took place with the greateſt regularity,

gularity, notwithſtanding the unwillingneſs of the baron, who taught with extreme negligence. But his pupil did not make leſs improvement. The progreſs of Mr. Renaud was not ſo rapid. He read the travels of Cyrus without comprehending them when Sainville could fluently explain the Spectator.

Two months elapſed in this manner, when Sainville one day going to Magdalen's, found the old woman was gone out, and Jane all alone, keeping the houſe. He remarked that the young girl was dull, and had been crying; and, upon interrogating her, Jane confeſſed that ſhe was fond of Sylveſter the vine-dreſſer, whoſe father, finding her too young and too poor, would not conſent to their marriage; that in ſhort, *the good lady*, having promiſed ſixty crowns, the father had given his word; that the banns had been publiſhed, but that juſt now he came and retracted what he had ſaid, and fell out with Magdalen,

dalen, of whom he required an hundred crowns inſtead of the ſixty that were promiſed. The young girl added, that ſhe durſt not apply to *the good lady*, fearing, after all ſhe had done, to abuſe her generoſity. Sainville liſtened to this recital with much emotion. Conſtance being mentioned in it was ſufficient to intereſt him in the moſt lively manner. He thanked Jane for having confided in him, recommended ſecrecy, eſpecially with *the good lady*, and promiſed that ſhe ſhould marry Sylveſter the next day. He actually ſent for the father, and gave Jane ſuch a good dowry, that the vine-dreſſer joyfully fulfilled his engagements. It was agreed that all theſe circumſtances ſhould be kept ſecret from Conſtance, and that the wedding ſhould be the next day. Jane and her intended went to Conſtance and received the gift which ſhe promiſed, when they informed her of the day fixed for their marriage, and mentioned that it would be

celebrated by a little rural feaſt. The day being come, Georgina, as ſoon as ſhe awoke, received a handſome gown, which was ſent to her from Jane: but Georgina, quite delighted, immediately gueſſed that her godfather was the author of this new preſent. At twelve o'clock, two of Sainville's gardeners, dreſſed as ſhepherds, went to Conſtance's houſe, carrying a large baſket decorated with ribands, and filled with flowers and fruits. They were preceeded by the married couple, returning from church; all the village formed a numerous company; and fidlers, playing rural airs, completed the proceſſion. Conſtance accepted the baſket, but did not appear. The peaſants ſent her notice, that in the afternoon they would dance in the little wood, and they entreated her to augment their joy by her preſence; when ſhe promiſed ſhe would, and the company retired.

Meantime Conſtance wiſhed to make up a bouquet of flowers out of thoſe that were preſented to her: but what was her ſurpriſe, when, upon looking into the baſket, ſhe found charming verſes, wherein her beneficence was extolled in the moſt delicate manner. Thoſe verſes, written by a hand which ſhe could not but recollect, were ſigned by Sylveſter and his wife, and contained the moſt reſpectful and tender expreſſions of the livelieſt gratitude. Conſtance heſitated upon what courſe ſhe ought to take. "Shall I go," ſaid ſhe, "to the little wood? Will they dare to be there? Will they break their promiſes? Which will triumph, curioſity, or the fear of diſpleaſing her to whom they have hitherto teſtified their reſpect? This is a doubt that muſt be reſolved." The time drawing near, Conſtance determined upon going to the little wood, where ſhe arrived ſomewhat uneaſy and troubled, and found the

the bride, at the head of all the young girls of the village, dreſſed in white, waiting for her at the entrance of the wood. Conſtance, attended by the ſound of the bagpipes and tambourines, was led in pomp to an artificial hall of verdure which had been made during the night, by lopping the branches and cutting the trees. This rural grove was decorated with garlands of roſes and cyphered flowers, forming and repeating a thouſand times the name of Conſtance. At the bottom there was a kind of throne of graſs, to which the queen of the feaſt was conducted, and obliged to ſit down. The dancing then began; and Conſtance, having got rid of an importunate crowd, gave way, without reſtraint, to her reverie and reflexion. She ſeveral times caſt her eyes around the grove, in dread of diſcovering Sainville, but at length ſhe began to perſuade herſelf that he was not there: ſhe inquired of ſome peaſants, who all aſſured

her that he was at the chace, which made her more tranquil. But her ſurpriſe increaſed upon every reflexion that aroſe upon a conduct at once ſo reſerved, ſubmiſſive, and at the ſame time full of ſuch diligent and delicate ſolicitude. "Perhaps, after all," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "it is only a ſport, an amuſement: they wiſh to know to what degree a woman can ſhew herſelf inſenſible to vanity, and they amuſe themſelves by making the experiment. Such undoubtedly is the ſole cauſe of every thing which excites my aſtoniſhment." The cloſe of day ſurpriſed Conſtance, while intenſely occupied by theſe different thoughts; ſhe then wiſhed to return home, and the peaſants accompanying her, led her under an illuminated bower, where ſhe found a collation, ſerved with as much elegance as profuſion; and after ſtopping a few minutes, ſhe returned homewards, attended by a party of the wedding company. By the way, ſhe queſtioned

queſtioned the bride, who, after ſome little heſitation, entruſted her with her hiſtory, and told her all that Sainville had done for her. Conſtance was more affected by this diſcovery than by the agreeable *fête* with which ſhe had juſt been entertained; for ſhe diſcovered in it ſomething more intereſting and more delicate than gallantry. This incident made her recollect the conduct of Sainville towards Magdalen: ſhe felt herſelf flattered that he had imagined the beſt means of pleaſing her was by being beneficent; and ſhe ſaid to herſelf, "What kind of a man, then, muſt this be, who, without knowing me, ſo well gueſſes my wiſhes?"

Whilſt all this was paſſing, Sainville, at the chace, ſtrove in vain to conceal his agitation. The uncertainty of the ſucceſs of his entertainment was not the only uneaſineſs that he experienced, for the baron diſconcerted and embarraſſed him. He had made a myſtery of this little intrigue,

and he had reaſon to apprehend that his friend would be diſpleaſed at ſuch a reſerve: however he prepared himſelf to bear with good humour an *eclairciſſement*, and to cover his embarraſſment by pleaſantry and gaiety. They both returned to the caſtle, and ſat down to table. Roger, as uſual, came in at the time of ſupper; and though quite tired with the wedding, and the collation which he had ſerved, he entered into a long narration. Mr. Renaud, who had alſo returned from the *fête*, joined him; when the baron, quite aſtoniſhed and diſpleaſed, aſked ſeveral queſtions; and Sainville, being diſconcerted, paſſed ſome jokes, for the firſt time in his life, but not in a witty manner, and endeavoured to haſten the ſupper, in order to terminate the converſation. In getting up from the table, he complained of an extreme laſſitude, and went haſtily into his chamber, where, ſoon forgetting the baron, he thinks of nothing but Conſtance, and of the

parti-

particulars he receives about the entertainment. He then waited with impatience for the arrival of Sylveſter, whom he had deſired to aſk Conſtance's permiſſion to bring the muſicians under her terrace in the evening by moonlight, for the purpoſe of giving her a rural ſerenade. Sylveſter at laſt arrived, quite out of breath, and ſaid that Conſtance had conſented, provided they would retire before twelve o'clock. Sainville immediately ſent for four muſicians, who had lately come from Paris, and went along with them to the terrace, where they began to play upon the horn and clarinet in the moſt maſterly ſtyle, and ſuddenly the moſt delightful muſic was heard. Conſtance, who expected to hear only the ruſtic ſounds of the bagpipes, at firſt imagined ſhe was deluded by a dream: but the pleaſure which ſhe ſoon experiences makes her forget even her ſurpriſe; ſhe gives herſelf up to that vague and pleaſing reverie which expreſſive and tender muſic inſpires: ſhe recollects the moſt intereſt-

ing moments of her life—dangerous reflexions, which ſhe had promiſed to baniſh for ever from her imagination. The time, the place, the coolneſs and beauty of the night, the choice of the muſic, and the capital execution of it, all contributed to give to this nocturnal and myſterious concert an enchanting and ſupernatural effect.

In the midſt of this moſt pathetic *cantata*, Sainville made the muſic ſuddenly ceaſe, by giving the ſignal of retreat, and immediately the company ſilently withdrew. Conſtance ſighs, and remains a long time motionleſs upon her graſſy ſeat. She cannot determine to leave the terrace where her heart had been ſo greatly affected by receiving ſuch ſweet impreſſions. However ſhe reſolves to prohibit every thing that could trouble her tranquillity by reviving in her mind ſuch dangerous ideas, and ſhe took the determination of never accepting any concert, and of becoming more recluſe than ever.

The next day, at ſeven o'clock in the morning, the baron abruptly entered Sainville's room, whom he found in bed. He then deſired the ſervant to leave the room, and ſat down near the head of the bed with an air which announced that he was going to call him to an account; and this Sainville wiſhed rather to avoid. They were both, for a few moments, profoundly ſilent, when the baron at laſt began to ſpeak. "It appears to me," ſaid he, "that the air of L**** is better for you than that of Paris." Sainville, imagining that the precaution of ſending the ſervant away was for the purpoſe of inquiring about the ſtate of his health, anſwered ſmiling, that he found himſelf very well. "Yes," replied the baron, "you recover yourſelf here, and I am dying; therefore I adviſe you to remain where you are: but for my part, I ſhall return to Paris." At theſe words Sainville appeared confuſed. "O! what!" ſaid he, "my dear Ver-

ceil, do you ſpeak ſeriouſly? No, I cannot think ſo."—"Hark ye," interrupted the baron; "it is your fault: it depended upon yourſelf not to commit it, and you ſhould not have made me act the moſt ridiculous part. You ought to have frankly ſpoken to me: I liſten to reaſon, and have not acted ſo fooliſhly as you. I was deluded for awhile, I confeſs, but that is paſt, and friendſhip remains."—"Ah!" cried Sainville, "you ought to forgive me. Could I read my heart? Do I know, even now, what paſſes in it?"—"If you are ignorant of it, I will inform you. You are paſſionately in love."—"My dear baron, I am extremely pleaſed with your ſuggeſtion—no, I am only ſurpriſed, perhaps vexed—but be it what it may, do not leave me."—"I will ſtay if I am uſeful to you. My friendſhip will eaſily conquer ſuch a new ſentiment; it will be agreeable to me to ſacrifice it for you; and even if I cannot ſurmount it, I

ſhall

ſhall not therefore be a confidant leſs faithful. A rival and a confidant would be a ſingular and a new character, but be aſſured I would very well perform it."—"I do not doubt it," replied Sainville, ſmiling, "for I know that your heart is as generous as your ſoul is romantic." This anſwer charmed the baron, and made up matters: it flattered his fancy, and preſented to his idea a long train of intereſting events and ſingular ſituations. In ſhort, it would form a romance, in which the character of a confidant, far from being a ſecondary part, might become as brilliant as the hero himſelf.

In the mean time Sainville unſucceſſfully renewed his attempts to obtain Conſtance's permiſſion to repeat the nocturnal concerts. A conduct ſo ſingular and ſo well kept up confounded all the ideas of Sainville. "This woman," ſaid he to the baron, "is truly an incomprehenſible being: ſhe is inacceſſible to vanity. With-

out pride and artifice, ſhe has voluntarily formed the inconceivable deſign of flying from all ſociety, and of living quite alone. I doubt not, but am certain that ſhe keeps up no correſpondence, that ſhe writes no letters, and receives none: however ſhe is in love; ſhe wears the portrait of a charming young man. But do you conceive, that with ſuch a ſentiment ſhe can appear ſo calm and ſo happy? By the uniformity that is obſervable in all her conduct, one would be more inclined to attribute her miſanthropy to wiſdom than to paſſion."—"Be aſſured," replied the baron, "that a violent reſolution is always the effect of a violent paſſion. She muſt be of a very lively diſpoſition, to have formed, at her time of life, ſuch a reſolution; and we may expect every thing from a lively genius."—"Nothing is ſo intereſting," ſaid Sainville, "as a young and handſome woman who conceals herſelf, and conſequently refuſes the homage which all others of her ſex ſeek

with

with ſo much avidity. How inſipid coquetry is, when compared to this ſtriking apathy! I am certain, if we could more frequently ſee Conſtance, we ſhould be much leſs occupied about her. We have hitherto only had one interview with her, and our imagination undoubtedly conceives a thouſand charms ſhe does not poſſeſs. Perhaps her full face is not ſo perfect as her profile; her countenance has not, perhaps, that angelic expreſſion which her features made us ſuppoſe; and probably the day-light is not ſo favourable to her complexion and figure as the light of the moon; in ſhort, by being in her company, we ſhould perhaps find that ſhe has leſs wit than we imagine." The baron ſtrongly argued againſt this opinion; for, being again the confidant of his friend, he wiſhed Sainville to be paſſionately in love; and at the ſame time he would fain think that he experienced the ſame ſentiment, in order to perſuade Sainville as well

well as himſelf that he makes a ſacrifice equally meritorious and heroic.

One evening the baron received from Paris a letter from Madame de Tervures, with whom Sainville fell out a ſhort time before his departure. This rupture, occaſioned by the infidelity of that lady, made a great deal of noiſe. The baron in vain endeavoured to reconcile the two lovers, and remained the friend of Madame de Tervures. As he no longer concealed any thing from Sainville, he read to him this letter, couched in the following terms:

'Yes, certainly, I like *ſhort details*, 'when made by you, for the mind or the 'heart can then draw intereſting infer- 'ences from them. A pen in your hand 'becomes a pencil: you paint inſtead of 'relating. When I read your letters, I 'hear and ſee you. You attract me 'wherever you are, and I cannot help re- 'maining there. But you do not now

'ſpeak

'ſpeak to me with that unlimited confi-
'dence, of which it is ſo pleaſing to me
'to give the example: you are become
'myſterious and reſerved. In love, myſ-
'tery and reſerve are very often a mere
'delicate circumſpection; in friendſhip
'they are always a crime. To deceive
'one's miſtreſs, is ſhewing a deſire of pre-
'ſerving her, of ſtill loving her. Diſſi-
'mulation with a friend is treachery. Per-
'haps you will think there is too much ri-
'gour in theſe reflexions, but let your
'heart conſider them as the expreſſion of
'my ſentiments for you.'

"What a puzzling ſtyle!" exclaimed Sainville, interrupting the baron. "How can you like Conſtance's manner of writing, and admire ſuch letters? How can one enjoy the charms of nature and ſimplicity, when ſeduced by affectation? But let us ſee what Madame de Tervures would be at: ſhe will certainly ſpeak of Conſtance?" At theſe words the baron,

taking up the letter, read aloud what follows:

'By the divine providence of friendſhip 'I have diſcovered all that you wiſhed to 'hide from me. I know that your beauti- 'ful Engliſh woman is a courtezan, noted 'by her figure, talents, and the infinite 'number of admirers ſhe has ruined: I 'know, that having ſeduced a young 'lord, the only heir to a great fortune, ſhe 'was going to marry him, when this fond 'lover ſurpriſed her in the arms of ano- 'ther. The exceſs of his paſſion made it 'be feared that he would again be en- 'ſnared by this ſyren, for nothing could 'oblige him to leave England. His re- 'lations then prevailed upon this danger- 'ous miſtreſs to go over to the continent. 'They gave her a great deal of money, 'and promiſed her, beſides, an immenſe 'ſum if ſhe remains three whole years out 'of her country perfectly *incog.* in order 'that the young man may not trace her

'out,

'out, and be again ſhamefully captivated.

'This will explain the whole myſterious conduct of your Engliſh woman; this is the reaſon why ſhe conceals herſelf, and lives in ſolitude, neither receiving any one, nor holding any correſpondence. I was informed of all this hiſtory by lord Belmont, who is perſonally acquainted with this courtezan, whom you have ſo generouſly ſet up for a heroine of romance. I told him what you wrote to me of Conſtance, when he immediately recollected the celebrated Ophelia, (which is her true name,) and informed me of all that I have juſt now related. Such is the worthy object of the new paſſion of your friend; for notwithſtanding your diſcretion, I know that he is her lover; and——'

Here Sainville roſe up with agitation. "What!" ſaid he, "this ſtory is not the invention of Madame de Tervures? It

is

is lord Belmont who relates it."—"You are intimately acquainted with him," replied the baron, ſtruck with amazement. "Write to him, requeſting the particulars upon this ſubject."—"I ſhall moſt certainly do ſo. But are you not ſtruck with the probability of this ſuppoſition?"—"Conſtance an adventurer, a courtezan! No; it is a thing impoſſible for me to believe."—"You have travelled twice to England, have you ever heard any talk of this Ophelia?"—"Yes, a great deal, but I never ſaw her; as ſhe was at Bath when I was in London."—"What did they ſay of her?"—"They praiſed her beauty, her wit, her talents——"—"Wit and talents! What coincidents! I ſhall write this very night to lord Belmont, for this uncertainty is intolerable." Sainville being uneaſy, agitated, filled with miſtruſt, ſorrow, and fear, wrote without delay to lord Belmont, and received the following anſwer:

'As

'As I do not wiſh, my dear marquis, 'that you ſhould be the dupe and ſport of 'an ambitious and ſeducing courtezan, I 'ſhall anſwer you with the exactneſs that 'you deſire; at the ſame time, if my 'letter ſhould enable you to recognize 'Ophelia, obſerve ſecrecy, for it would 'not be juſt to make her loſe the ſix thou-'ſand guineas which the family of her late 'lover have engaged to pay her, if ſhe re-'mains three whole years in France in 'profound retirement, and perfectly *in-'cog.* I repent of having fooliſhly re-'lated her hiſtory to Madame de Ter-'vures: but you can make reparation for 'it, by writing to me that your neighbour 'does not in the leaſt reſemble my Ophe-'lia; that in ſhort you know with cer-'tainty who ſhe is, &c. I ſhall ſhew that 'letter to Madame de Tervures, and by 'this means Ophelia's ſecret will not be 'betrayed by us. But to return to her. 'You requeſt me to give *her deſcription*,

'which

'which is as follows: She is thirty years 'of age, fair, and of a very elegant mien; 'ſhe has large blue eyes, regular features, 'and a countenance full of mildneſs; ſhe 'knows ſeveral languages, and ſpeaks 'them well; amongſt others the French 'language; her ſhape is handſome, and 'her manners extremely noble; ſhe has 'always ſeen very good company among 'men, and her talents have frequently 'gained her admiſſion into the ſociety of 'women; ſhe has alſo an excellent de-'meanor, which the uncommon depra-'vity of her conduct never made her 'loſe; ſhe poſſeſſes wit, originality, and 'the moſt attracting graces; ſhe draws 'like an angel, ſings, and dances delight-'fully. Upon the whole, although Ophe-'lia is not very young, ſhe is certainly the 'moſt charming and the moſt dangerous 'perſon that can be met with. It is nearly 'two years ſince ſhe left England, and the 'place of her reſidence is unknown; ſo

'that

'that in eighteen months ſhe may return
'to her country, and demand the ſix thou-
'ſand guineas. I muſt not omit telling
'you that ſhe was born in Ireland, of a
'noble catholic family, who, it is ſaid,
'gave her an excellent education: but a
'Scotchman ran off with Ophelia when
'only fourteen years old, and carried
'her to London, where, in a ſhort
'time, ſhe loſt all the principles that ſhe
'had received in her childhood. To
'make you more completely acquainted
'with Ophelia, I ſend you the literal tranſ-
'lation of a letter ſhe wrote to me after
'her laſt adventure, and at the very mo-
'ment of her leaving England. It ap-
'peared to me ſo original, that I very
'carefully preſerve it. Adieu, my dear
'marquis.'

Lord Belmont's letter contained half a page more: but Sainville and the baron being impatient to read that of Ophelia,

eagerly

eagerly ſeized the paper that incloſed the tranſlation, which they found to the following purport:

Letter from OPHELIA *to Lord* BELMONT.

'I am going, my dear William, like a 'princeſs of romance, to travel under a 'fictitious name, according to the condi-'tions impoſed upon me by the family of 'lord ***, who are ſtill afraid of Ophe-'lia, notwithſtanding the juſt anger of her 'lover. Is not this glorious for me? I 'am more flattered by their fears, than 'eager to gain the ſix thouſand guineas. 'Would it not be a fine thing to be mar-'ried to lord *** a few months after 'having received that ſum? Do not 'laugh; this project may very probably 'be effected. But who knows if I ſhall 'then wiſh it! I loved lord ***, not-'withſtanding the *incident* which made us 'fall out: but it is likely that in three

'years

'years I ſhall have no love for him; and
'in that caſe his fortune and rank would
'not enſnare me. I can *give myſelf*, but
'not *ſell myſelf*; and if the greateſt lord in
'England wanted to marry me, he muſt
'firſt pleaſe me. In ſhort, I have pro-
'miſed to live in France in obſcurity for
'three years. You will perhaps ſay that
'that it is impoſſible for one with my
'figure, talents, and inconſtant diſpoſition:
'but my plan is fixed; it is ſimple and
'ſure: a profound retreat, an auſtere life,
'will ſecret me from all human eyes, or
'make me unknown to them. I have
'enjoyed, and I know every thing but
'one; that is, *virtue*. I will, however,
'try to enjoy it. I was hurried far away
'from it, not by my own choice, but by
'the corruption of others. I have always
'reſpected its image wherever I thought I
'diſcovered it; and this odious blaſ-
'phemy never profaned my lips—*virtue*
'*is only a chimera*. Too weak to follow it
'myſelf,

'myſelf, too inconſiderate to regret it, I 'abandoned it, without deſpiſing and even 'without renouncing it. I know how far 'diſtant I am from virtue: but what can I 'not do in three years to attain it? To ſeek 'it ſincerely, one muſt begin by practiſing 'it, which I will do without hypocriſy; 'for I ſhall moſt carefully avoid all occa-'ſions of a relapſe. I ſhall live in ſuch a 'manner as I may no longer hear thoſe 'inſipid and monotonous praiſes with 'which I begin to be diſguſted. They 'ſhall no more boaſt of my graces and 'figure, but I ſhall hear my goodneſs, 'mildneſs, and beneficence extolled. I 'ſhall then be reſpected: I ſhall know if 'eſteem be more ſatisfactory than flattery; 'and after having enjoyed theſe new ſuc-'ceſſes, perhaps I ſhall not any more re-'ſume the too famous name of Ophelia. 'But you will no doubt ſay, my dear Wil-'liam, that I am ſtill too young to frame 'ſuch deſigns. No; it is, at my age

'meri-

'meritorious to put them in execution. 'If I devote myſelf to retirement, I will 'carry with me the regret of the world 'and of love. I will make a noble ſacri-'fice, and not an inglorious flight. What 'merit could there be in the ſacrifice of a 'magdalen in grey hairs? The penitents 'of Albania and Correge ought to be our 'model. However this is not irrevocably 'decided; I meditate *only an attempt.*

'Adieu, my amiable William; endea-'vour to forget the remembrance of ſome 'of my little *faux pas*—in ſhort, of my 'former infidelities to you; remember, 'that at leaſt I am *faithful* in friendſhip. 'Adieu: believe that Ophelia, either *pro-'fane* or *ſanctified*, will never forget, but 'always love you.'

After this letter was read, the two friends ſilently looked at each other with a kind of aſtoniſhment which ſtupified them. Sainville firſt broke ſilence. "It is no longer poſſible to doubt it," cried he.

"It is ſhe—it is the ſame Conſtance whom we have ſo reſpectfully worſhipped theſe ſix months paſt. We muſt confeſs that ſhe has made us act a very ridiculous part."—"And we cannot complain of it," replied the baron; "for ſhe never made the firſt advances: ſhe conſtantly refuſed all our attentions with extreme politeneſs; therefore we have nothing to reproach her with."—"Very well," replied Sainville, diſpleaſed; "you may think it quite harmleſs to be thus treated by a courtezan. As for myſelf, I honeſtly confeſs that I am extremely piqued, and I think myſelf too old to be ſo credulous."—"However," ſaid the baron, "we are not certain that Conſtance is really that deſpicable Ophelia. I allow that the affinity is ſtriking, but yet her age does not agree with that of Conſtance; for Ophelia, it is ſaid, is thirty years old: Conſtance is only twenty-five, and even appears younger. The doctor of Limoux ſays that one would ſuppoſe her to

be

be only nineteen or twenty."—"That old man's opinion is of very little conſequence. Beſides, beauty may deceive one reſpecting the age. But read the two letters over again." Saying theſe words, Sainville began to read them; after which he was confirmed in the idea that Conſtance and Ophelia were but one perſon. The baron was of a ſimilar opinion, and was ſeriouſly grieved; while Sainville, vexed and diſconcerted, hid his exceſſive rage by joking. "My dear Verceil," ſaid he, "you had conceived the plan of an heroical romance: it is a pity your thoughts will be loſt. This will only form a *novel*, in which our parts will not be very brilliant."—"I hope, at leaſt," replied the baron, "that this diſcovery will have the impreſſion upon you that it has produced upon me."—"What?"—"That it may cure you of a paſſion founded upon an error."—"A *paſſion!* That is a great word. I had not yet any paſſion, and this will not deſtroy a tempo-

rary fancy. This Ophelia has dignity, wit, a lively diſpoſition, and extraordinary talents: ſhe is beautiful as an angel. Nothing can diminiſh my love; and what we have learnt of her morals does not make me loſe hopes. I ſhall only ſhake off that profound reſpect with which ſhe certainly amuſes herſelf, and ſecretly ridicules it; I ſhall endeavour in future to appear leſs ridiculous, when ſhe will become more compliant, and every difficulty will diſappear." This diſcourſe extremely diſpleaſed the baron, whoſe principles, habits, wit, and diſpoſition gave him, all his life, an invincible diſguſt for courtezans. Beſides, ſeeing that Sainville was infinitely more amorous than he would confeſs, he was mortally afraid of the aſcendancy which ſuch a dangerous woman might have over him. Theſe reflexions plunged him into a profound dullneſs, when he formed the reſolution of henceforward employing all his diligence to recall Sainville to reaſon, and of neglecting no occaſion to

make

make him ſenſible of all the debaſement of ſuch an attachment.

It was now in the midſt of autumn, when Sainville, more than ever occupied about Conſtance, formed a thouſand new projects, and at laſt determined to bribe the ſervant of Conſtance, that he might hide himſelf at night in her houſe. He one morning took this reſolution, and thought of executing it the next day. This ſame day he took a long walk with the baron, but without communicating his deſign to him. In returning to the caſtle, he thought he heard, at a diſtance, the cries of a child, when he liſtens, and no longer doubts it. The cries ſeemed to proceed from the wood where Conſtance paſſed her time, and where Sainville had for more than ſix months forbid himſelf to enter. He flies into the wood, the baron following him, and they run to the place where the cries are heard, when ſuddenly they perceived little Georgina in

tears, who cried out, "*Come and help mamma.*"—"Where is ſhe?" aſked Sainville. "Yonder, in the great avenue," anſwered the child. The two friends immediately ruſhed forward into the way they were directed, when lo! an unexpected ſight preſents itſelf to their view: Conſtance diſhevelled, her head uncovered, purſued by three robbers, and upon the point of falling into their hands. Sainville and his friend, unarmed, haſten towards her with inconceivable ſwiftneſs. He ſeiſed one of the three men, and threw him down: the two others, purſued by the baron, took flight.

Meantime Sainville recollects that the man he had knocked down was the ſon of one of his huntſmen, when he threatens him with a juſt puniſhment, and endeavours to go away from him, but meets with the root of a tree, which made him ſlip down. At this moment the villain he had juſt left roſe up, approached him, and

plunged

plunged his knife into his body; and after having committed this aſſaſſination, he fled and diſappeared. Whilſt this tragical ſcene was acting, Conſtance, thinking herſelf ſtill purſued, ran on, with her back to her deliverers, for ſhe had perceived neither Sainville nor his friend. At length overcome with fatigue, ſhe feels her ſtrength forſaking her; and hearing a perſon's foot very near, ſhe turns round her head, trembling. But what was her joy, upon perceiving the baron! "Cheer up, madam," cried he; "the villains who purſued you have diſappeared, and are now a great way off. Whilſt Sainville knocked down one, I chaſed the two others, who are gone out of the wood, and I ſaw the third taking the high road, flying as faſt as he could. I gave over the purſuit, that I might quickly return to diſſipate your uneaſineſs."—"Ah! ſir," ſaid Conſtance, "what am I not indebted to you! But let us go and ſeek for Sain-

ville." At theſe words ſhe leans upon the baron's arm, and with tottering ſteps accompanies him, with as much pain as trouble and eagerneſs. Uneaſy about Georgina, ſhe calls out loudly to her. A few minutes after the child came running to her, and they aſked if ſhe knew where Sainville was, when ſhe anſwered, that ſhe had only ſeen him the moment he entered the wood. They then walked on to the ſide of the high road, while the baron queſtions Conſtance, who related, in a few words, the particulars of this adventure. Upon entering the wood, ſhe had ſent her ſervant on an errand; and immediately after he was gone, ſhe ſaw theſe three men at a diſtance, whoſe countenance and ugly appearance rather alarmed her. When they perceived her, they quickened their pace, and ſhe began to run away. Whilſt Conſtance was ſpeaking, the baron attentively gazed at her, ſhe had thrown off her hat that ſhe might run the better, and

nothing hid the moſt charming face that nature had formed: but the decline of day, and the obſcurity of the wood, did not permit the baron perfectly to diſtinguiſh her features. Meantime Sainville did not appear, and Conſtance and the baron in vain called him ſeveral times. This ſilence aſtoniſhes and diſquiets them, for they could not imagine that Sainville had gone out of the wood. They ſtill kept walking on, and night approaching, increaſed their ſecret terror; when ſuddenly Conſtance, finding ſomething wet under her feet, ſlid, and fell into the arms of the baron. He raiſed her up, and caſting his eyes upon her white gown, he perceived ſome ſpots which appeared to him to be black. The ſame thing ſtruck Conſtance, who took up her gown, and looking cloſely at it, ſhe ſhuddered; and being penetrated with the moſt horrid terror, exclaimed, "Good heavens! it is blood!" At theſe terrible words, the baron, quite

frantic, left her, and following the fatal traces of the blood, he found, after proceeding a few steps, the body of his unhappy friend stretched upon the grass. He thought he was dead, and gave himself up to the most violent despair. Constance, stifled with sobbing, fell upon her knees, and with uplifted arms implored heaven, while little Georgina made the woods resound with her lamentable cries. But Constance soon recalling her courage, said, "We are weeping over him, and letting him remain without succour. He is alive: his blood still runs." At these words the baron looked at the wound, and with his handkerchief, and that of Constance, made a compress which stopped the blood. After this was done, they considered the means of removing him, when Constance proposed making a litter of branches. They accordingly begin the work; the baron breaks down the branches, and Constance assisting him in this

troubleſome work, appears animated by a ſupernatural ſtrength. She gives her girdle, necklace, garters, and even a linen handkerchief which covered her breaſt, to faſten the branches together. Georgina ſtripped herſelf likewiſe, and the work advanced with inconceivable rapidity: but there was ſtill wanting a binding to ſtrengthen the whole. Conſtance's long hair falling down, and floating upon her ſhoulders, offered her the laſt reſource. Without heſitation ſhe cuts off part of it, with which ſhe forms a thick cord, and the baron ties and faſtens it round the branches. At that moment Conſtance's footman, after having a long time ſought her, being attracted by the noiſe, at laſt arrived. He appeared to the baron ſent by heaven to help him in that dreadful ſituation; and without loſing time he made him aſſiſt in laying Sainville upon the litter; after which, turning round to Conſtance, "Madam," ſaid he, "the caſtle is half a league

from here; your houſe is very near."— "Come, come," interrupted Conſtance, "I am going to conduct you there." The baron and Thomſon then took up the litter, and ſet out, while Conſtance and Georgina walked before them, ſhedding a torrent of tears. They at laſt arrived at the peaceful dwelling of Conſtance, where the ſervant, frightened, opened the door. They laid Sainville, ſtill ſenſeleſs and motionleſs, upon Conſtance's bed, and the baron ſent for Mr. Renaud. Meantime lights are brought, they waſh Sainville's wound with freſh water, made him ſmell ſalts, and at laſt he began to open his eyes. What objects ſtrike them! an unknown apartment, the baron holding him between his arms, and Conſtance upon her knees at the head of the bed, diſhevelled, bathed in tears, and in ſuch a ſituation as made her a thouſand times more handſome and attracting. Sainville, quite aſtoniſhed, gazed at her with inexpreſſible emotion.

His

His ideas were wandering and confuſed; his weak head had not yet come to: but the ſight of Conſtance recalled all the faculties of his ſoul. He contemplated her in a kind of ecſtacy, and without recollecting, he knew that it muſt be her.

At length Mr. Renaud arrived, dreſſed the wound, and finding no appearance of danger, anſwered for Sainville's life. Their conſternation is now ſucceeded by the moſt lively joy. Mr. Renaud gave the patient ſome drops of elixir, which reviving his ſtrength, immediately brought him to his perfect ſenſes. He took hold of Conſtance's hand, crying out, with tranſport, "What! is it her? What! do I ſee her?" Intoxicated with the pleaſure of looking at her, and ſeeing, upon her enchanting face, ſome tears dropping ſlowly, he preſſed her trembling hand againſt his heart, repeating, with profound affection, "What! it is her!"

Meanwhile

Meanwhile Mr. Renaud having felt his pulſe, ſaid that it was quick, which he attributed to the number of lights and the ſmallneſs of the room; he therefore propoſed removing Sainville upon a litter to the caſtle, adding, that the free air would do him good. Sainville conſented, in order to leave Conſtance to repoſe, which ſhe ſo much wanted. The baron ſaid they muſt again take the litter made of branches, when Sainville aſked how this litter had been made; and this brings about an explanation which increaſes his gratitude and happineſs. Conſtance's houſe was ſurrounded by all the inhabitants of the village, who had been attracted by the report of this tragical event, and they eſcorted the litter to the caſtle. When he was come into his room, Sainville deſired the litter to be left there, and placed near his bed. Mr. Renaud preſcribed ſilence and tranquillity to the patient, when every

one

one retired; and the baron going to bed, ſaid to himſelf, "What a pity it is, that the woman who has been the cauſe of ſuch an adventure ſhould not be as intereſting by her morals as ſhe is captivating by her figure and manners!"

Sainville had a fever, and paſſed a reſtleſs night, but the fever abated towards morning. At eight o'clock the baron entered his room, when he found the patient employed examining the litter. The hair was already untied, and Sainville had tied it round his arm. The baron ſat down upon his friend's bed, and looking at the hair of Conſtance, "Well!" ſaid he, "behold you are now quite amorous!"—"Can you be aſtoniſhed at it, after having ſeen her?"—"She is beautiful, I allow, and abſolutely like the portrait that Lord Belmont has drawn of Ophelia."—"But it is impoſſible ſhe can be thirty years old."—"Her youthful appearance is really ſingular, after the mode of life ſhe has led:

led: however, quietneſs, ſolitude, the mildneſs of the climate——"—"If Conſtance be Ophelia, lord Belmont has not ſufficiently praiſed her beauty. He ſpeaks too indifferently of it."—"It is becauſe he is no longer fond of her. The enthuſiaſm for a courtezan can be but of ſhort duration."—"He does not ſpeak of her long black eye-laſhes, her beautiful teeth, the ſtriking expreſſion of her countenance! No, Conſtance is not Ophelia. We have forgot to ſend lord Belmont ſome of her writing——"—"Who knows if ſhe writes to us in her own hand? Perhaps her valet is her ſecretary."—"He does not know French."—"He perhaps feigns to be ignorant of it. Beſides, in writing to us ſhe might alter her hand."—"Blue eyes with black eye-laſhes, brown eye-brows, and fair hair—this is ſurpriſing! I will write again to lord Belmont." This diſcourſe was interrupted by Mr. Renaud, who came in and told Sainville that the Engliſh lady had

had written to him, requeſting to know the ſtate of the *marquis*'s health, when Sainville aſked to look at the note: but Mr. Renaud had miſlaid it; and it was of no uſe Sainville's being angry, as the note could not be found. Two or three hours after, upon Sainville ſaying that he hoped Conſtance would pay him a viſit, Mr. Renaud ſaid, "Yes, certainly. I forgot to tell you that ſhe mentioned ſo in her letter. She will come this afternoon." One may eaſily imagine that Mr. Renaud was a little reprimanded for theſe *inconceivable forgets*, and that they impatiently waited for the hour they hoped to ſee Conſtance.

Sainville's windows looked into the yard, and at four o'clock he heard a general commotion in the houſe, the people going haſtily down the ſtairs, calling to the baron, and running towards the yard. Sainville being then alone with Mr. Renaud, appeared much agitated. Mr. Renaud went out to inquire the cauſe of all this

this noiſe; and returning almoſt immediately, "I thought," ſaid he, "that the caſtle was on fire: but do not be alarmed; it is nothing: it is only the foreign lady come to viſit you. As ſhe raiſed her veil upon entering the yard, every one ran to ſee her, the people here are ſo curious." Mr. Renaud was ſtill ſpeaking, when the door opened, and Conſtancé, conducted by the baron, appeared, and advanced ſoftly. They brought her a chair, when ſhe ſat down, and caſting her eyes upon Sainville, ſhe bluſhed, ſeeing what he had done with her hair. She ſaid, with ſome degree of embarraſſment, that he attached too much value to a thing which another perſon would have done in her place. Sainville anſwered two or three words, badly articulated, and ſuddenly loſt the power of utterance, looking at her with an eagerneſs and attention which nothing could divert. Conſtance ſpoke much of her gratitude, but only ſhewed a ſenſi-

bility

bility rather applied to the ſervice than to the perſon. Her viſit was ſhort, and yet the converſation flagged ſeveral times. The baron often revived it; and when Conſtance was going away, he conducted her to the bottom of the ſtairs. He had ſcarcely entered the room again, when Sainville called to him, "Well, my dear baron," cried he, "can you think that ſhe is a courtezan?"—"I ſhould never have ſuppoſed ſo: but it is impoſſible to doubt it——"—"I am certain that all the affinities which perſuade you of it are only falſe appearances. Let us not ſpeak of her graces, nor of her raviſhing beauty. But what nobleneſs! what modeſty! what an air of candour and innocence!"—"Were you not informed that Ophelia is particularly diſtinguiſhed by her deportment and manners?"—"And I maintain, that it is ridiculous to think the woman we have juſt now ſeen and heard ſhould be Ophelia." At theſe words the

baron

baron ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and did not anſwer. Sainville was diſpleaſed, and his friend went out of the room. Meantime the villain who aſſaſſinated Sainville was overtaken in his flight, and brought to the caſtle. This unfortunate creature having been for ſome time driven from his father's houſe, on account of his depraved conduct, was aſſociated with a number of ſmugglers. He proteſted that he was intoxicated on the day he met Sainville, and that the fear of being confined for life had induced him to commit the crime of which he was guilty. He was put into the priſon adjoining the caſtle, although Sainville was determined not to give him up to juſtice. The father of this murderer was a venerable and virtuous old man, who, dreading to implore his maſter's clemency, went and threw himſelf at the feet of Conſtance, entreating her to beſeech Sainville in his favour. He repreſented that he had two marriageable daughters, who would be diſ-

honoured

honoured if their brother underwent the juſt puniſhment of his crime, and that the whole family would in that caſe be obliged to leave the village, and to quit their country for ever. Conſtance ſent the old man to Sainville, with a note, containing the following words:

'Deign, ſir, to liſten to the ſupplication 'of an unfortunate father, driven to de- 'ſpair. If I can obtain this favour of you, 'I ſhall certainly have done enough for 'him.'

Sainville (as may be eaſily gueſſed) received the old man, and after having heard what he had to ſay, gave him this anſwer to carry to Conſtance:

'How can I, madam, revenge an 'action, which has cauſed the moſt happy 'moments of my life? The favour you 'aſk of me was granted, from the bot-

'tom

'tom of my heart, in that ſame chamber 'where the old man will receive it from 'you. Condeſcend, madam, alſo to tell 'him I will portion his daughters, and 'that they ſhall be married within eight 'days.'

Conſtance, with tears in her eyes, informed the old man of the goodneſs of his maſter, and enjoyed great pleaſure at his ſurpriſe, and the tranſports of his gladneſs.

Sainville, ever faithful to his promiſes, ſent the criminal to India, according to his father's wiſhes, and the two young girls were married. Conſtance wrote again to him upon this ſubject. Her note was kind, but it was found too reſerved and too ſhort. Knowing that Sainville had entirely recovered from the fever, ſhe did not viſit him any more, but contented herſelf by ſending twice a day to learn the ſtate of his health. Sainville being impatient

patient to ſee her again, was induced to go out much ſooner than the ſurgeon wiſhed. In ſhort, after ſome ſtrong expoſtulations, he dreſſed himſelf, ordered a carriage, and propoſed to the baron to go together to Conſtance's houſe; when the baron anſwered peeviſhly, but at laſt accompanied him. They arrived, and obtained eaſy admittance. Sainville was extremely deſirous of going into the ſame room where he had ſeen Conſtance ſo compaſſionate and agitated, but he did not obtain that ſatisfaction; for he was ſhewn into a library, where Conſtance ſoon waited upon them. She could not help ſhewing the greateſt tenderneſs, by remarking the paleneſs of Sainville: but after this firſt emotion, ſhe reſumed her calm and ſerene air, and carried on the converſation with as much eaſe as agreeableneſs. Sainville, only occupied with the pleaſure of ſeeing and hearing her, ſpoke little: but the baron, more curious,

and

and leſs abſorbed, put many queſtions to her reſpecting her taſte, occupations, and her reliſh for reading; when ſhe anſwered with that mildneſs and brevity which is ſo intereſting in people obliged to ſpeak of themſelves. The baron, who had no deſign of praiſing her before Sainville, diſcovered, with vexation, the charming ſimplicity and modeſty of her anſwers. Hoping that ſhe would be leſs informed than graceful and witty, he turned the converſation upon literature, and talked of our beſt works. Conſtance was perfectly acquainted with them, and paſſed her judgment upon them with as much ſolidity as delicateneſs. The baron being confounded, became ſilent, while Sainville triumphed. Juſt then Georgina entered running, and threw herſelf upon her godfather's neck, who embraced her tenderly. "This is our adopted child," ſaid he, turning towards Conſtance.—"Yes," replied Georgina, "there is mamma, and here

here is papa."—"Oh! my dear Georgina!" cried Sainville, "call me always by that name."—"I promiſe you I will," replied Georgina. During this little dialogue, the baron, being impatient, roſe up, and approaching a piano forte, he expreſſed to Conſtance a deſire of hearing her play; when Sainville immediately joined him. Conſtance, yielding to their intreaties, ſat down to the inſtrument, played in a maſterly manner, and afterwards accompanied with her voice an Italian air. The excellence of the ſong, the ſweetneſs and beauty of her voice, inſpired Sainville with an admiration which he expreſſed with enthuſiaſm; and the baron peeviſhly ſaid, that he never heard an *amateur* have ſuch influence. A moment after, addreſſing himſelf to Conſtance. "Your ſuperior talents, madam," ſaid he, "make me remember the great deſire I had to be acquainted with the celebrated Ophelia: but ſhe was travelling

while I was in London." Upon hearing the name of Ophelia, Conſtance ſtarted, and bluſhing, looked downcaſt. The baron then looked at Sainville, who was likewiſe abaſhed, for he had attentively remarked the trouble and embarraſſment of Conſtance. This obſervation ſtruck him, chagrined him, and at the ſame time inſpired him with extreme reſentment againſt his friend. There was a moment's ſilence, after which they ſpoke of different things; and at laſt Sainville, taking leave of Conſtance, terminated his viſit. Upon ſtepping into the carriage, he ordered his coachman to drive towards the little wood. Being paſſionately in love, and piqued againſt the baron, he took pleaſure in mortifying him, by unequivocally expreſſing his ſentiments. In approaching the high road, the baron diſcovered, with aſtoniſhment, an infinite number of labourers at work round the little wood. "It is eight days," ſaid

Sainville,

Sainville, "ſince I gave orders to execute this work, that this beloved wood of Conſtance may be transformed, and become ſtill more worthy of pleaſing her. It will reach as far as the river which borders the meadow, and there is to be a canal dug, which will ſurround it by the ſide of the high road, and form an iſle. Conſtance may then walk without any fear or danger: it will be her garden, and I ſhall neglect nothing to embelliſh it." At this confidence the baron appeared uneaſy. "This undertaking," ſaid he, "is immenſe."—"Notwithſtanding," replied Sainville, "it will be finiſhed next ſummer." The baron did not anſwer any more, and was ſullen the reſt of the day: but the next, he had a long explanation with his friend, when he did not forget to ſpeak to him of the extreme confuſion which Ophelia's name appeared to cauſe Conſtance. Sainville agreed that he had remarked her agitation; "And I confeſs,"

continued he, "that I cannot gueſs the cauſe: but the more I ſee her, the more abſurd it appears to ſuppoſe ſuch a perſon to be a courtezan. However, if I muſt not conceal any thing from you, let this incomparable woman be what ſhe may, ſhe has won my heart. I love for the firſt time, and I love paſſionately."—"What if Conſtance ſhould be that Ophelia?"—"I cannot admit this odious ſuppoſition."—"But ſhould you acquire poſitive proofs of it?"—"I ſhall be much to be pitied."—"But at leaſt you will combat a paſſion ſo unworthy of you?"—"If I am beloved, I would combat it in vain."—"If it is ſo, I preſume to tell you, Sainville, that this paſſion will debaſe you, will ſacrifice your liberty, and conſequently your honour."—"Hark ye; if it be true that Conſtance has been a depraved woman, if it were poſſible that vice could influence this angelical form, and all the charms of candour and innocence, I would

ceaſe

ceaſe to admire virtue, I would ceaſe to believe in its power, and I would become one of the moſt unfortunate and auſtere of mankind; for a ſtrange revolution has taken place in my heart. The idea of Conſtance being Ophelia did not affect me about fifteen days ago, as then I had for her only an ordinary ſentiment: but this idea is now to me as vexatious as incomprehenſible. I ſee, in Conſtance, the model of perfection: I feel leſs the deſire of pleaſing her, than the wiſh of admiring her qualities. I can ſupport every thing, even her indifference, if ſhe be really worthy of the ſentiment with which ſhe inſpires me. This ſentiment recalled me to life; it equally occupies my mind, heart, and imagination. If I ceaſe to adore Conſtance, I ceaſe to live." The baron, from this diſcourſe, conceived that if Sainville were at laſt obliged to acknowledge Conſtance to be the dangerous Ophelia, it would very much afflict him,

but would undoubtedly cure him of his paſſion; and he therefore took the reſolution of employing every poſſible means to enlighten him upon this ſubject.

Sainville, through circumſpection, remained a few days without returning to Conſtance's houſe: but he at laſt attempted another viſit, and the baron accompanied him. Conſtance was not at home, but the ſervant aſſured them ſhe would return ſoon, and ſhe ſhewed the two friends into the library. While waiting for Conſtance, the baron amuſed himſelf by looking at ſome pretty little paintings in water colours, done by Conſtance, which decorated the room they were in. Afterwards, ſeeing upon the table a *port-folio* half opened, which contained drawings, he looked over them; and ſtopping to inſpect two charming paintings, he ſuddenly made an exclamation, which drew Sainville from a profound reverie. "See! ſee!" cried the baron; "here is a complete proof!

proof! Look at theſe pictures, and read at the bottom of them the name of Ophelia." At theſe words Sainville turned pale; and indeed, upon reading this fatal name, ſtood petrified. Juſt at that moment Conſtance entered; and upon ſeeing her *port-folio* open, her pictures in the hands of the baron, and Sainville motionleſs, ſhe bluſhed, ſeemed ſurpriſed, and diſconcerted: but quickly recovering herſelf, ſhe advanced, and addreſſing the two friends, expreſſed her regret at not having ſooner returned home. Sainville did not anſwer. The baron, whilſt ſhe was ſpeaking, ſhut up the *port-folio*, and then ſaid to her, "We were admiring, madam, theſe admirable paintings."—"This praiſe is too flattering," replied Conſtance. "Theſe two paintings are of my execution."—"What, madam!" ſaid Sainville, in a faltering voice, "the two paintings which are in this *port-folio?*"—"Yes, ſir," interrupted Conſtance; "they

were painted by me." Saying these words, she took the *port-folio*, and shut it up in a drawer; and as she turned her back, Sainville, quite perplexed, whispered to the baron, intreating him to leave him alone with her. The baron accordingly rose up, and went away. Constance returned, and with a tranquil air, full of dignity, sat down opposite Sainville who was standing up. He gazed at her attentively, without uttering a single word; and a few minutes after, Constance, likewise looking at him, said, "Well, sir?" This question was expressed with a striking mildness and firmness. Sainville then prostrated himself at her feet, crying out, "Well, madam, you wanted to prove me—but these two paintings were not done by you: I can never think that your hand could trace the name at the bottom of them." At these words Constance, obliging Sainville to rise up, appeared embarrassed and affected; when he drew

drew a pocket-book from his pocket, and ſhewing it to her, "Do you know lord Belmont?" ſaid he. "Yes, I know him."—"This pocket-book contains letters from him; condeſcend to read them: but in looking them over, do not forget that they were written ſix weeks ago, and recollect my conduct ſince that time. Adieu, madam: I ſhall come to-morrow to fetch theſe papers, and to receive your final anſwer." In pronouncing theſe words, Sainville laid the pocket-book upon the table, and went out immediately. Next morning he received a packet from Conſtance, which contained lord Belmont's letters, and one from her, in theſe words:

'I have read the letters you left with 'me, but I do not think this kind of con-'fidence ſufficient to deſerve all mine. 'Your eſteem is dear to me: I wiſh to 'obtain, but not to *conquer* it. Henceforward

'ward friendſhip is the only ſentiment I 'can grant. Do you wiſh to be my 'friend? Let ſympathy alone inform 'you and juſtify me. If your heart be not 'acquainted enough with mine, I am 'ſorry for it: but never expect from me 'the leaſt explanation. This is all that I 'can ſay to you; and I aver, by all that 'is ſacred, that I did not wiſh to *prove* 'you.

'The two paintings you have ſeen were 'executed by me: *I traced the name you 'ſaw upon them*, and yet my life was pure, 'and my heart always cheriſhed virtue.

'You ought now to anſwer me; and 'if you believe me, you will give me a 'proof it, by never interrogating me 'again upon that ſubject.'

After having read this letter, Sainville roſe up, and haſtily dreſſed himſelf. As he was going out, the baron entered his room, when Sainville ſhewed him Conſtance's letter.

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of chance."—"That would be truly miraculous! A woman with ſuch affecting modeſty, celeſtial countenance—a woman who thus expreſſes and conducts herſelf being a hypocrite and the opprobrium of her ſex, would be the height of prodigy." In finiſhing theſe words, Sainville haſtily left the baron, and ran to Conſtance's, whom he found in her garden. She made him ſit down beſide her upon a graſs ſeat, when Sainville haſtened to thank her for her letter. "It is needleſs to aſſure you," added he, "that my admiration for you can neither be diminiſhed nor increaſed. The moſt urging of all intereſts certainly makes me deſire to be able to unravel your ſentiments. This is what affects me. Of what conſequence is it to me to learn your true name? I know your temper, your diſpoſition, and your heart; that is ſufficient to render you juſtice, but too much for my tranquillity. Never expect me to aſk you

you any indiſcreet queſtion—but allow me to venture one, which your letter does not forbid me.—Tell me—are you diſengaged?"—"No, I am not."—"Oh! heavens! you are married?" At theſe words Conſtance, inſtead of anſwering, appeared penſive; and Sainville ſoliciting a clear and poſitive anſwer, "Do not you believe," ſaid ſhe, "that a ſolemn and voluntary oath ought to be a ſacred engagement?"—"But," replied Sainville quickly, "have you given your hand? In ſhort, have you a huſband?"—"Alas!"—anſwered Conſtance, and could ſay no more: her tears interrupted her ſpeech. "In the name of heaven," cried Sainville, "explain yourſelf!"—"Well," ſaid Conſtance, "by law I can diſpoſe of my hand, but religion and honour forbid it: ceaſe, then, to cheriſh ſentiments which I perceive you have, for I cannot anſwer them; and remember, after this confeſſion, you cannot entertain, nor let me perceive

perceive them, without mortally offending me." This diſcourſe, pronounced in an emphatic and ſevere manner, determined Sainville quickly to change the converſation. "This is ſufficient, madam," replied he. "I can conſtrain myſelf to ſilence; and it is in my ſentiments alone that I ſhall find the neceſſary ſupport to enable me to obey you. You have offered me your friendſhip: I have a right to it. It is a treaſure I claim, and without which life would become inſupportable." Conſtance, who had formerly perceived ſomething arrogant and violent in Sainville's diſpoſition, did not expect ſo much ſubmiſſion. She was affected by it, and recompenſed him by tenderly looking at him. Sainville, far from appearing to perceive it, turned the converſation upon travelling, aſked ſome queſtions about England, and ſpoke a great deal of Spain and Italy. He diſplayed wit and inſtruction: he was amiable, appeared to be ſo, and about an hour

hour after went away, carrying with him as much hope as he gave ſecurity to Conſtance. She indeed had juſt told him that ſhe was not free, but had no huſband: ſhe was only bound by an oath; and notwithſtanding the ſeverity of her language, this kind of engagement did not alarm Sainville. The ſcruples of delicacy could not have ſuch an effect upon a man who had ſo often triumphed over them. Conſtance was by no means a woman of ordinary talents, neither had the plan of conduct he meditated any thing common in it: ſhe knew his paſſion, teſtified her gratitude, ſhewed him much ſenſibility, and received his attentions and viſits. Could there be more powerful motives to expect the moſt complete ſucceſs, in the courſe of time, by addreſs and perſeverance? One thing only made him rather uneaſy: Conſtance was devout, and thought herſelf bound by religion. She ſaid, (and he could not forget it,) *but religion forbids*

bids it. Theſe words, which ſhe ſeemed to pronounce with a ſort of emphaſis, ſtruck Sainville: he diſcovered in them ſomething myſterious, that inſpired him with a fear which neither his ſelf-love nor his reaſon could ſurmount.

Having been two days without returning to Conſtance, he one day thought of going to ſee her, when he received a letter from Paris. He recollected the hand of lord Belmont: it was an anſwer to his laſt queſtions. Sainville never had the leaſt doubt of the ſincerity of Conſtance: but he could not help experiencing a diſagreeable emotion upon opening the letter which was either to confirm or to waver his opinion and confidence. One may judge what he felt, upon reading theſe words:

'I have ſo much to write to you, my 'dear marquis, that I ſhall begin without 'any preamble; for the recital which I

'am

'am going to give you will anſwer all 'your queſtions.

'Madame de Tervures, the day before 'yeſterday, requeſted me to acompany her 'to the abbey of Maubuiſſon, where ſhe 'was educated, and where a young lady 'was to conſecrate herſelf to God by ſo-'lemn vows: a curious enough ſpectacle 'for an Engliſh perſon. We arrived at 'the monaſtery at twelve o'clock, and 'were immediately conducted into the ex-'terior church, which is only ſeparated 'from that of the nuns by a grate. We 'there met ſome of our acquaintance, who 'told us that the noviciate, who was going 'to pronounce her vows, was a foreigner, 'of great beauty, and that ſhe had be-'ſtowed conſiderable gifts to the convent. 'This recital intereſted me. I waited for 'the ceremony with a degree of curioſity 'mixed with emotion; when all of a ſud-'den the curtain which covered the grate 'was drawn up, and we ſaw the noviciate

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'in the midſt of the nuns. Judge my 'ſurpriſe, upon ſeeing that ſhe who ad- 'vanced towards the altar to conſummate 'her ſacrifice, was the famous and charm- 'ing Ophelia. She appeared to me, under 'this modeſt dreſs, a thouſand times hand- 'ſomer than ever: her eyes were down- 'caſt; a ſweet ſerenity gave her face an 'affecting and extraordinary expreſſion: 'there was ſomething noble in her counte- 'nance, which perſuaded me that ſhe only 'felt, at that moment, the glory of expi- 'ating her errors, and of reſuming all the 'dignity of her ſex. I thought I ſaw a 'fallen angel whom the heavenly favour 'was reinſtating in its primary rank. She 'articulated her vows in a firm tone. I 'heard that ſeducing and deceiving voice 'at laſt pronounce an irrevocable oath: 'I ſaw this woman, who was ſo long aban- 'doned to pleaſure and diſſipation, conſe- 'crate herſelf to retirement and obſcurity: 'I ſaw laid upon her head the eternal veil

'which

'which was to hide, for ever, her danger-
'ous beauty.—But this is enough of Ophe-
'lia, who does not intereſt you. Let us
'return to your ſtranger. You ſee how
'ill-founded our ſuſpicions were. If I
'had at firſt received the exact portrait of
'her which you laſt ſent to me, it would
'have informed me her true name; yet I
'cannot entertain the leaſt doubt reſpect-
'ing her, as I formerly ſaw her hand-
'writing, and immediately knew that of
'the note incloſed in your laſt letter.
'However, as ſhe wiſhes to conceal her
'name, I ought to reſpect a ſecret
'ſnatched from her, and I ſhall not betray
'it. All that I can inform you is, that
'Conſtance, the victim of love and ca-
'lumny, was the moſt diſtinguiſhed and in-
'comparable beauty in England, cele-
'lebrated as much by her wit and good
'character, as by her illuſtrious birth, rank,
'and misfortunes. I was never intimately
'acquainted with her; I have only been

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'in her company two or three times: but 'that is ſufficient to admire and always to 'remember her. She muſt be about 'twenty-four or twenty-five years old. 'Happy! a thouſand times happy, he 'who may conſole and deliver her from 'her juſt miſanthropy!

'Adieu, my dear marquis. I ſhall re-'turn immediately to London, with ex-'treme regret at being deprived of the 'pleaſure of ſeeing you before my depar-'ture: but I entertain the flattering hope 'of hearing ſometimes from you.'

As ſoon as Sainville finiſhed reading this letter, his firſt impulſe was flying out of his room to ſeek for the baron; and nothing could equal the impatience he felt to juſtify Conſtance. "Here, here," cried he, accoſting his friend; "read this letter of lord Belmont."—At theſe words the baron took the letter, and while he was reading it, Sainville looked attentively at him,

him, enjoying the aſtoniſhment and confuſion expreſſed upon his countenance. The baron having entirely read the letter, pretended to be ſtill reading, that he might not be obliged to ſpeak. "Well," ſaid Sainville, "do you ſtill believe that Conſtance is the *courtezan Ophelia?*"—"Spare me," replied the baron, "for I am truly confounded."—"Yes, my friend, I am too happy to refuſe pardoning you."—"Happy! She correſponds, then, to your love? She has confeſſed it to you?" At this queſtion, Sainville related, without prevarication, all that had paſſed between him and Conſtance: he ſpoke of his paſſion, hopes, and deſigns with ſo much frankneſs and confidence, as entirely diſpelled the embarraſſment of the baron, who felt nothing but the joy of regaining his friend and the ſubject of a romance, whoſe loſs he had ſo much deplored. "Now I adviſe you," ſaid he, "to hide lord Belmont's anſwer from Conſtance. This little diffi-

diſſimulation will give the greateſt weight to your conduct towards her."—"No, no," replied Sainville; "to diſſemble with Conſtance would be a crime; yet I confeſs I thought of doing it: but I abjure the idea for ever." Sainville ſpoke with ſincerity: lord Belmont's letter ſerved to exalt his imagination and love. The moſt elevated man can never permit himſelf to deſpiſe the voice of the public. He may not, perhaps, deſire the praiſes of the multitude on his own account, becauſe he congratulates himſelf at being inſenſible to them. Vulgar pride ſolicits them, while ſcrupulous ſelf-love refuſes and even knows how to diſregard them: but it is allowable to deſire them for whom we love, and then they become highly delightful. Sainville thought, with rapture, that the object he adored had left in England a ſplendid reputation; he was proud even of thoſe trifling advantages; and although he did not attach any value to birth,

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yet he was flattered that Conſtance's was illuſtrious. He wiſhed to find in her all that could excite a juſt admiration, and every thing which could dazzle the vulgar. He went that very night along with his friend to Conſtance, who received them with her uſual kindneſs, and after half an hour's general converſation the baron went away. Sainville, finding himſelf alone with Conſtance, ſpoke to her of lord Belmont; and without ſhewing his letter, gave her an account of what he had written to him about her and Ophelia. Conſtance liſtened to him with the greateſt attention. "I am much indebted to you," ſaid ſhe, "for this confidence, and I ſhall never forget that your eſteem for me has been able to withſtand ſuch ſingular and ſtriking appearances. Gratitude makes it my duty to inform you, at laſt, who I am.—I am going to entruſt you with all my ſad ſecrets!"—In pronouncing theſe words, ſhe roſe up, went and opened a bureau, from which

which ſhe took out a manuſcript, and preſented it to Sainville. "Here is," ſaid ſhe, "the hiſtory of my life. I employed myſelf writing it in French, ſince I have been in this retirement. Take this manuſcript along with you, and read it; and if you wiſh to communicate it to your friend, I conſent." At theſe words Sainville, full of trouble and agitation, received the manuſcript, and haſtened to terminate his viſit, that he might the ſooner begin this intereſting narration. He went precipitately to the caſtle, ſhut himſelf up in his room, where he ſat down before a table with two lights upon it, and unfolding the manuſcript he read the following

Hiſtory of Lady CLARENDON.

I WAS born in London, of catholic parents, diſtinguiſhed by their birth and fortune, and being their only daughter, I was

brought up with great care and tenderneſs. They cultivated my little natural talents, and inſtructed me in good principles; but there is, in the beſt education of women, a dangerous error—that of exalting ſenſibility—which could not be avoided in regard to me. The tendereſt of mothers was my only governeſs, who joined to the moſt endearing virtues a mind equally cultivated and enlarged. She would certainly have been an incomparable tutoreſs, if her heart could have permitted her to liſten more to reaſon upon the following point: I was born with great ſenſibility; and my mother, far from endeavouring to moderate my inherent affections, daily augmented their energy by her conduct and example. Her exceſſive tenderneſs inſpired me with the fondeſt, and conſequently the moſt unreaſonable attachment for her. I ſlept in the ſame room, I accompanied her every where, was always with her; in a word, I was ſo accuſ-

tomed to her company, that being deprived of it but for an hour cauſed the greateſt grief to me; and if indiſpenſable affairs ſometimes obliged her to leave me for a day, I paſſed the time of her abſence in affliction and tears. At her return I was in a ſtrange ſituation, weeping, crying, and experiencing the moſt violent emotions. My mother partook them, and her tender careſſes became the recompence of an exceſſive ſenſibility which ſhe ought to have ſuppreſſed. Nothing enlightens the mind ſo much as ſentiment. My mother applauded my progreſs, and was aſtoniſhed at my intelligence: ſhe found in me an acuteneſs and delicacy which children cannot have when their imagination has never been exalted. My father felt all the inconveniences of ſuch an education, and often ſpoke of it to my mother. "How can you expect," ſaid he to her, "that your daughter can be happy, with ſuch diſpoſitions as you give birth to

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in her? She has already felt the moſt violent emotions that can agitate the ſoul: her young heart has already loſt that amiable ſerenity, the ſweeteſt charm of innocence. Henceforward moderate ſentiments will appear inſipid to her, and ſhe will never think herſelf beloved, unleſs it be with idolatry. This refined ſenſibility you admire in her will give her an exceſſive delicacy, which will always render her diſſatisfied with others. She will ſigh in ſecret, on account of an imaginary ingratitude, ſhe will appear often unjuſt and fantaſtical; and if her inclinations do not correſpond with ſuch pure principles as ſhe has received from you, nothing will be comparable to the torments that the ſtrength of her paſſions, combated by duty, will cauſe her." Alas! theſe reflexions were too well founded: but they made little impreſſion upon the mind of my mother. My education was continued upon the ſame plan, and it was not

yet finiſhed when I had the misfortune to loſe the moſt reſpectable and beſt of mothers! The grief I could not help experiencing I thought would have coſt me my life. Although I was only thirteen years old, my ſorrow was as deep as exceſſive. Having eſcaped from the danger of a ſerious and long illneſs, I fell into a languid ſtate, which determined my father to make me travel; and he accordingly carried me to France, where we ſpent more than two years. I was in my ſixteenth year when we returned to England: my father then thought of chooſing me a huſband, and very ſoon many ſuitors preſented themſelves: but one only fixed my attention and wiſhes. I found in him a heart full of ſenſibility, an agreeable and cultivated mind, an even and ſweet diſpoſition, the moſt ſeducing figure; in ſhort, all that could intereſt and pleaſe. He loved me, and I partook of his ſentiments: our birth, fortune, and age were perfectly

perfectly ſuitable: I was in my ſeventeenth year, and he was twenty-ſix. All theſe concurrences determined my father in his favour, and the day of my marriage with lord Clarendon was at laſt fixed. In the interim my father fell ill, and died in a few months after. He left his affairs in the greateſt diſorder. My grief and inexperience rendered me incapable of arranging them; and the debts almoſt entirely ſwallowing up the fortune, at ſeventeen years of age I found myſelf deſtitute of any eſtate, a ruined orphan. Lord Clarendon, who had as much generoſity as ſenſibility, ſolicited me more ſtrongly than ever to accept his hand; which I ſelected in a more happy period, to whoſe wiſhes I yielded without repugnance; and immediately after my marriage we ſet out for one of his eſtates which lay in Derbyſhire. Some friends accompanied us thither; among them was count d'Elby, the brother-in-law and intimate friend of lord Clarendon.

The count d'Elby, then thirty years old, had a countenance commanding attention and reſpect, and a figure more regular than agreeable: he ſpoke well, his converſation was intereſting and witty, but too affected; and his manners, noble and ſimple as they appeared, were not natural. A conſtrained and compoſed deportment, a look piercing, at the ſame time wandering and diſtracted, and very ſeldom fixed, which I never ſaw in any one but him, and a melancholy and unhappy phyſiognomy, gave to his perſon a certain equivocal and falſe air which at firſt ſtruck one, and with which it was difficult to be reconciled. It was as eaſy to know he was an obſerver, as plain to diſcover that he wiſhed to hide it; and his ſecret manner of examining what paſſed around him naturally inſpired him with reſerve, and even miſtruſt. In ſhort, one could readily perceive that there was no agreement between his exterior and his diſpoſition; yet, having an ardent imagi-

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nation, and the moſt vehement paſſions, he affected an extreme gravity, and an auſtere wiſdom. Born with rare qualities and extraordinary ſenſibility, he would have been virtuous had he had a little more empire over himſelf: but yielding to all his inclinations, he was always contriving how to diſguiſe thoſe which could hurt his reputation, and thereby became inſenſibly familiariſed with a diſſimulation which he carried to the higheſt and moſt dangerous pitch. Having been brought up with lord Clarendon, they were both, from their infancy, united by the moſt ſtrict friendſhip. The count, a member of parliament, and one of the moſt eloquent orators of that time, had, over his friend, all the aſcendancy which great talents, a renowned capacity, and brilliant ſucceſſes can afford. Lord Clarendon had adopted all his political ideas, and being naturally indolent and idle, was entirely guided by him. Conformity of opinion, in England, forms

a kind of public intimacy, which one cannot break without loſing a part of his perſonal conſideration. But ſtronger and dearer connexions ſtill united the count and lord Clarendon: the latter owed his life to count d'Elby, who, in one of the battles at the end of laſt war, expoſed himſelf to the moſt imminent danger, to ſnatch his wounded friend from the hands of the enemy. The count had rendered ſeveral other ſervices to lord Clarendon, and at laſt married his ſiſter. The counteſs d'Elby was adored by her brother, over whoſe mind ſhe had the moſt abſolute ſway. Leſs tender than him, ſhe had no true attachment but for her huſband; and making a merit of a ſentiment conformable with her duty, ſhe thought herſelf the moſt virtuous of women, becauſe ſhe was the moſt affectionate. Without forbearance towards thoſe who did not enjoy the ſame happineſs as herſelf, ſhe deſpiſed and feared them, looking upon them as dangerous

gerous rivals, or at leaſt who might become ſuch. Full of ambition and vanity, ſhe had always cheriſhed the hope that her brother would never change his liberty for the matrimonial tie; and ſhe ſaw his marriage with a mortal vexation that inſpired her with a ſecret antipathy againſt me; which ſhe always maintained. Lady Bolton, another ſiſter of lord Clarendon, had all the defects of the counteſs, without the art and wit neceſſary to conceal them. The deſtiny of a young perſon almoſt always depends upon the diſpoſitions and ſentiments of thoſe who ſurround and govern them. Youth has need of counſel and indulgence; and as they cannot do without a guide, their imprudence and thoughtleſſneſs are excuſable. Benevolence only can gain their confidence, and unhappily I never found among my relations that ſweet ſentiment with which I felt the neceſſity of inſpiring them.

In the mean time I knew all the happineſs that an ardent and lawful paſſion could procure. The lively tenderneſs, the aſſiduous cares of an adored huſband, gratified all my wiſhes. We ſpent the greateſt part of the day *tête-à-tête*; and after having ſaid all that love could inſpire, ſometimes a long ſilence ſucceeded ſuch agreeable converſation: but then, in the ſame room by the ſide of each other, a delightful reverie, without taking up our thoughts, ſatisfied our hearts; and in this happy calm the time glided away with inconceivable rapidity. Hunting, fiſhing, walking, in ſhort, all the amuſements the country furniſhed, continually preſented us new charms. I rode on horſeback, ever inſeparable from lord Clarendon: I accompanied him every where; his taſtes became mine; and being along with him, nothing appeared to me inſipid or monotonous. To prolong ſuch happy days, he often

often propoſed walking by moonlight in a neighbouring wood: there, ſoon diſtant from the reſt of ſociety, we found ourſelves alone; there Aurora frequently ſurpriſed, and warned us of the hour which love had made us forget. I cannot now recollect what affair obliged lord Clarendon to be abſent a few days, when I could not accompany him, but he wrote a note to me, the day before his return home, containing theſe words: 'I find I cannot 'live a moment without you. Ah! at 'leaſt, if we are again compelled to be 'ſeparated, let it never be for eight days, 'for this trial ought to convince us that 'this time is too long.'

How pleaſing it is, when we love to exceſs, to hear ſaid, with ſuch ſimplicity, what, if ſpoken in cool blood, we would think ſo exaggerating and extravagant! I recollect, with ſorrowful pleaſure, that delightful time when I experienced ſuch keen emotions; yet my felicity was not

complete. An inexpreſſible but inſupportable uneaſineſs often embittered it. Every day that paſſed over I regretted it as part of a happineſs, the inſtability of which I confuſedly foreſaw. With apprehenſion I looked forward to the future. Not having a happier deſtiny to expect, I dreaded a fatal change in my ſituation; and I ſaid to myſelf, *What would become of me if he ceaſed loving me?* This overwhelming idea inceſſantly came into my mind, and the poſitive teſtimonies of lord Clarendon's tenderneſs made it more terrible and ſtriking. Beſides, he poſſeſſed all the ſentiments of my heart, and I ſaw other objects, his ſiſter and the count d'Elby, attracting his attachment. I wiſhed to cultivate the friendſhip of theſe two perſons, but their indifference repelled me, inſpiring me with the ſame ſentiment; and at the bottom of my heart I could not help thinking it extraordinary that lord Clarendon did not appear to obſerve their indifference

difference to me. Then too much beloved to be diſcontented, I was at leaſt very often ſorrowful. Eighteen months paſſed in this manner; at the end of that time different events called lord Clarendon again to court: but before we could conſent to leave this caſtle, now ſo dear to us, we wiſhed to go together, and ſee, once more, all the places which recalled to our mind the happineſs we had there enjoyed; and, through a weakneſs which love alone inſpires, theſe kind of adieus cauſed us as much ſorrow as regret. I remember, when we got into the coach, we both looked at the windows of my room, and I then experienced a great oppreſſion of heart, and an inexpreſſible ſadneſs.

We arrived in London, where I ſoon had juſt reaſon to regret the pleaſing retirement in which our happieſt days had been ſpent. Buſineſs, duty, pleaſure, continually ſeparated lord Clarendon from me; I became penſive and pre-occupied; I per-

I perceived I was leſs amiable in his ſight, and he paid leſs attention to me. Too proud and too delicate to complain, inſtead of diſcloſing my ſentiments, I took the reſolution of being ſilent and indifferent. An exceſſive ſenſibility, perhaps, rendered me unjuſt, by hiding the ſole motive which could have excuſed me; and I only ſeemed capricious and peeviſh, as it appeared to me that he ought to have gueſſed my thoughts. Lord Clarendon, leſs delicate and tender, did not comprehend me: he believed that the vivacity of my ſentiments was diminiſhed. He was at firſt ſecretly afflicted at it: then he perſuaded himſelf that our hearts were inwardly always the ſame, and that the perturbation produced by the diſſipation of high life alone cauſed the change which had aſtoniſhed him. This perſuaſion, under which he reſted ſecure, made him appear to me indifferent and inſenſible: but it would have been leſs cruel to me to

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ſee him diſcontented. Too ingenious in tormenting myſelf, I at laſt believed he had no more affection for me, and I formed the deſign of regulating my ſentiments according to his. More than once I thought I could ſucceed in my reſolution: but time only can deſtroy a ſincere paſſion, which we have enjoyed without any reſerve. Frequently, when I moſt flattered myſelf with having recovered the command of my reaſon, a ſlight attention, a ſingle word, a look from lord Clarendon, made me again feel all the violence of my firſt ſentiments: then, abjuring all my reſolutions, I accuſed myſelf of ingratitude, and juſtified what before vexed me in his conduct with more art than he would have himſelf employed, had he attempted his defence. But ſoon after, paſſing from one extreme to another, I ſuddenly experienced the ſame fears, the ſame melancholy; and, a few months after, that ſtate became habitual to me. Thinking that

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lord Clarendon did not find any delight in my company, I neglected the opportunities I had of being alone with him. Our converſation became tedious. I was ſurpriſed to ſee him tired with me, and I compared his preſent manners with what they formerly were, without thinking that the alteration he perceived in my behaviour authorized his own. Being at laſt extremely diſcontented, and no leſs irritated, I could no longer conceal it. But this too late explanation had only the effect of increaſing my unhappineſs. I had loſt part of my influence over him, and my reproaches appeared to him only capricious and whimſical. However I was ſtill beloved. Lord Clarendon being naturally of a mild and moderate temper, heard me with aſtoniſhment, and anſwered me with ſenſibility. He aſſured me that I could never ceaſe to be dear to him, that his eſteem for me was equal to his affection, and that his confidence, being always the

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ſame, ought to be a proof of it; that he had been ſeveral times afraid his preſence and attentions would not be ſo agreeable to me as they were before, but that a ſingle word would be ſufficient to diſſipate his apprehenſion, and convince him he was miſtaken. In ſhort, all he told me was kind and reaſonable, but it was no longer the language of paſſion; and paſſion alone could ſatisfy a heart like mine. I replied to him, ſhedding a torrent of tears, that I loved him more than ever; that I did not exiſt but for him. He felt himſelf much affected, proteſted he was always the ſame, and then quitted me, in the perſuaſion he had convinced me of the ſincerity of his ſentiments; when, on the contrary, he left me in deſpair. When I was alone, I gave myſelf up to the moſt tormenting reflexions. "Can this be the ſame man," ſaid I to myſelf, "whom I have ſeen ſo paſſionately fond? With what compoſure he acknowledged that he

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ſuppoſed I had leſs love for him! Has this frightful notion, even for a moment, prevented him from abandoning himſelf to all the vain pleaſures of diſſipation? Has it made him leſs even-tempered or gay? No; he had reconciled himſelf to it without trouble and without regret. My being melancholy and peeviſh made him find leſs pleaſure in my company, and will very ſoon make it troubleſome to him. Our hearts were not adapted to each other, and his is not ſufficiently delicate and tender to excuſe or even ever to comprehend the true cauſe of my apparent injuſtice. I can only appear to him whimſical and capricious." Thus I aggravated my trouble, and inſenſibly dug the abyſs wherein I was going to loſe myſelf.

Incapable of diſſimulation, I could not aſſume the appearance of being ſatisfied. Expecting nothing from a freſh explanation, I did not wiſh for any: but I appeared more dull and uneven-tempered than

than ever. Lord Clarendon flattering himſelf at having entirely reſtored peace to my ſoul, was confounded at a conduct which appeared to him equally incomprehenſible and extravagant. He then began to abſent himſelf from me, not ſo much by chance as deſign; yet a ſincere tenderneſs and ſtrong propenſity towards me ſometimes brought him back: but I received him with ſuch embarraſſment, conſtraint, and indifference, that I at laſt entirely loſt him. In deſpair, odious to myſelf, life became inſupportable to me.

My heart, overwhelmed with grief and anxiety, wanted a relief it could not obtain but by imparting them to a friend. Oh! from what misfortunes a true one could have then preſerved me! Alas! I had none. I vainly ſought ſalutary counſel: I even ſaw around me people who, far from pitying me, openly condemned my diſpoſition and conduct. The enmity of my ſiſters-in-law ſeemed daily to increaſe;

creaſe; for I could eaſily perceive they prejudiced me with their brother, and that they prepoſſeſſed against me their numerous acquaintance, who formed the whole ſociety of lord Clarendon. They had it eaſily in their power to traduce me, for there is in my diſpoſition a certain mixture of timidity and pride, which always hindered me from endeavouring to regain the friendſhip of thoſe who deſerted me. I can, without any repugnance, confeſs a real fault, and do every thing to make amends for it, but the reſentment of injuſtice abſolutely takes away the deſire of juſtifying myſelf for a ſuppoſed one.

I fled from the world I never loved, and which my misfortunes made me hate. In this ſad ſituation, I remarked, with aſtoniſhment, that the count d'Elby appeared ſecretly to ſympathize at my troubles. I always met his obſerving eye, and frequently ſaw the expreſſion of tenderneſs and gentle pity upon his countenance; and this

this discovery revived in my heart a feeble ray of hope. I conceived, that if the intimate friend of lord Clarendon was affected at my destiny, he might soften its bitterness. However, I perceived that he wished to hide from me the sensibility he experienced, as he blushed when he saw my looks fixed upon him. I was afflicted at it, imagining he had no hope nor possibility of serving me; and this idea hindered me from entrusting him with my sorrow: but the compassion and sentiments I supposed in him inspired me with gratitude, which soon became a sincere friendship.

My misanthropy daily increasing, I declared I would not receive any more visits; and my health serving as a pretext, I renounced all kind of company. Lord Clarendon submitted himself to this last caprice with his usual meekness: but such a singularity could not enter his disposition. He continued giving suppers, and seeing his relations and friends; he per-

mitted me, without complaining of it, to keep myſelf ſhut up in my room, and made no change in his mode of living. This conduct perfectly ſhocked me. I perceived an indifference in it which completed my deſpair; for I flattered myſelf that my cloſe retirement would afflict, or at leaſt aſtoniſh him. When we experience a violent paſſion, and have no longer any hope of being beloved, we ſeek and take advantage of every means to attract the attention of the object of ſuch an unhappy ſentiment: we wiſh to agitate, pique, and even irritate him: for his anger or hatred would appear leſs inſupportable than his entire neglect.

In devoting myſelf to abſolute ſolitude, I however teſtified to count d'Elby the deſire of ſometimes ſeeing him. He ſeemed to be affected with ſuch an exception, and with pleaſure I ſoon obſerved a great change in his manners. Far from diſſembling the tenderneſs which I cauſed him,

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he ſhewed me the greateſt ſenſibility. He always ſpoke to me of the only object which could intereſt me: I eſteemed him, I entertained a ſlight hope that he could, in proceſs of time, be of uſe to me, and perhaps even reſtore a heart, without which I could not exiſt. All theſe confuſed ideas at laſt determined me not to conceal from him any thing of my ſentiments and ſituation. This particular confidence deeply affected him, and his tears mixed with mine. He ſpoke reaſonably to me, and blamed the exceſs of a delicacy of ſentiment which was ſo fatal to me; adding, that few men could partake, or even comprehend it: but that lord Clarendon, without having ſuch a paſſionate heart as mine, was not leſs worthy of my tenderneſs; that he had loved me with all the ardour of which he was capable; that my misfortunes only proceeded from my not calculating upon the infinite difference of our diſpoſitions, and requiring of him ſentiments

timents of which he was not ſuſceptible; that, in ſhort, I ought to have been contented with obtaining all the attachment he could grant, and not to have expected beyond poſſibility. I anſwered this diſcourſe by calling to his mind the firſt year of our marriage, when I was ſo happy. "You were then," replied the count, "the only object who could engroſs lord Clarendon's attention: ſince that time, being too much occupied with pleaſure, and led away by it, he at firſt neglected you, without having leſs love for you. In ſhort, his diſpoſition has not the ſtability and conſtancy of your's; and be aſſured, that even in ſolitude, in the courſe of time you would have experienced the trouble which now afflicts you. But," added he, "it would have ſtill depended upon yourſelf to have ſecured all your precious rights. By habituating yourſelf in ſeeing no more in him the tranſports of a lover, you would have preſerved, for ever, the moſt pleaſ-

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ing and laſting dominion over his heart; his ſentiment of predilection would have always been for you: but you wiſhed to obtain an excluſive one, and I believe it is only in the power of a woman to grant it." Theſe reflexions making me perfectly acquainted with lord Clarendon's diſpoſition, convinced me how wrong I was in judging his by my own. I apprehended I had loſt all his ſentiments, becauſe I could not conſent to loſe any. My regret was ſincere; and repentance accompanying it, made it ſtill more grievous. Lord Elby leſſened the rigour of ſuch a violent ſituation, by making me foreſee that my diſorder was not without a remedy, and that the heart of lord Clarendon might perhaps be eaſier regained than I imagined. I took this ſuppoſition for a poſitive aſſurance: I perſuaded myſelf that the count's intention was to operate ſuch a dear re-union, and I relied upon his friendſhip. The beſt means undoubtedly

would have been to have gone myſelf to lord Clarendon, and to have intereſted him, at leaſt, by a ſincere recital of all I ſuffered: but the embarraſſment of ſuch an explanation was not the only reaſon that prevented me. This proceeding was ſimple, therefore I believed, that had not the earl foreſeen ſomething more diſagreeable than the uncertainty of its ſucceſs, he would have adviſed me to put it in execution; and his ſilence upon that head perſuaded me it would have been imprudent in me to riſk it. I had no doubt the earl would act ſtrongly in my favour: his aſſiduity about me, the marks of concern I received from him, the long and lively friendſhip which ſubſiſted between him and lord Clarendon, in ſhort, every thing convinced me he exerted himſelf with ardour for our mutual happineſs. I did not give him any direct commiſſion, I only let him know how eagerly I deſired a reconciliation on which my life depended.

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I could not venture to entreat him to act, or even to ſpeak in my favour, as I imagined, that by leaving to himſelf the whole merit of ſuch an eſſential ſervice, I would give him a motive to act with more zeal and readineſs. By judging according to the diſpoſitions of my heart and ſenſibility, I, in ſhort, yielded to the fatal deſtiny which conſtantly induced me to chooſe what was moſt contrary to my intereſt. Of what avail is underſtanding and good ſenſe to a too delicate and paſſionate heart, who would never conſult but ſenſibility alone? Reaſon then, quite uſeleſs and vain, only preſents herſelf, to oblige us to count the faults ſhe was not able to make us avoid: ſhe is ſilent when her advice is neceſſary, and then we judge aright thoſe things only which leaſt intereſt us.

Meanwhile the time ſlipped over, and I found myſelf always in the ſame ſituation: but hope at leaſt rendered it ſup-

portable to me. The earl, more aſſiduous and tender than ever, conſoled me by proofs of a friendſhip from which I expected my happineſs. I knew that he daily ſaw lord Clarendon, and I thought he was quite occupied with the deſign of reconciling us. Such ideas were neceſſary, to prevent me from being the victim of a mortal grief.

Some time before my great intimacy with lord Elby, lord Clarendon had almoſt entirely given over ſeeing me; at leaſt he never came when I was alone: he only appeared when I was at my toilet, or when he was ſure of finding the earl with me. His viſits ſoon became as rare as they were ſhort. Since I began to conceive new hopes, I had only ſeen him twice: but it chanced that the laſt time I ſaw him he gave me motives to be better ſatisfied with him. He found me altered, and ſpoke to me of my health with an intereſted air, which prejudice made

made me attribute to the great aſſiduity of lord Elby. From that time I did not doubt he had already ſpoken to him of me; and this firſt imaginary ſucceſs gave me the greateſt hopes of the future. When I knew that he was with lord Clarendon, thinking myſelf the object of their converſation, I repreſented to my fancy all that might be ſaid: I thought I heard lord Elby gradually preparing the heart of his friend to ſenſibility; I ſaw lord Clarendon aſtoniſhed and moved; and thoſe conſoling chimeras reviving my courage, occupied me ſeveral hours in as ſtrong and delightful a manner as if I had really heard ſuch converſation.

One day when I was with lord Elby, a ſervant came, and ſaid that lord Clarendon wanted him. I ſtarted. He perceived my agitation; and upon his leaving me, I remarked he had tears in his eyes. I imagined that joy was the cauſe of this emotion, and that the happy and deciſive

moment was at laſt arrived. I immediately recollected all that he told me in our laſt converſation, I interpreted the moſt ſimple things according to my wiſhes; and I thought I clearly ſaw that my troubles drew near their end. Agitated, tranſported, I walked about my room, agreeably entertaining myſelf with the ſweeteſt illuſions: I repreſented to myſelf the object of ſo much love, more tender than ever, coming to wipe and dry the tears which he cauſed me to ſhed: I heard him proteſting to me an eternal affection. My gratitude did not make me forget lord Elby in this affecting picture: I ſaw him bringing his friend into my arms, happy himſelf at our happineſs, and enjoying the fruit of his triumph. Diſtracted by theſe deluding ideas, I was in a ſtate impoſſible to deſcribe; the leaſt noiſe, the creaking of a door, cauſed me the moſt violent and inexpreſſible palpitation of the heart. I frequently believed I heard at a diſtance the

voice

voice of lord Clarendon; I ſprung to meet him; and although deceived, I ſtill preſerved hope. In the midſt of this lively agitation I heard the door diſtinctly open, when I liſtened with extreme perturbation, and found it was lord Elby haſtily advancing. By his return, I then no longer doubted my happineſs. I wiſhed to run to meet him, but my limbs refuſed me their ſuccour. He entered alone, and I fell at his feet, without being able to utter a ſingle word. One glance informed me of my deſtiny. His dull and gloomy phyſiognomy chilled me to the very heart. I read my doom upon his countenance, and without any other explanation I gave myſelf up to the moſt violent and impetuous deſpair. He aſked me ſome queſtions, but without ſhewing any aſtoniſhment, or urging me to anſwer him, which completely perſuaded me that I did not deceive myſelf in my laſt conjecture; and he perceived I had foreſeen my misfortune.

Suffocated by a deluge of tears, I could not ſpeak. I ſcarcely heard the unconnected diſcourſe he addreſſed to me. Aſſuring myſelf all his efforts had been fruitleſs, judging by his deep ſadneſs, and the mortal embarraſſment he could not diſſemble, that he had loſt all hopes for the preſent and future, I thought I ought to ſpare him the pain of giving me uſeleſs and fatal details. I in general aſſured him of my gratitude, and begged of him to leave me alone. He anſwered me, bluſhing, that I was not at all indebted to him, aud that he was ignorant of what I meant. This anſwer appearing to me quite ſincere, I conceived that he thought it a duty not to confeſs how much he had tried to ſoften lord Clarendon's heart, from the fear of rendering him more guilty in my eyes, and thus of aggravating the horrors of my ſituation. I found this delicacy as natural as eſtimable; and impoſing upon me the obligation of reſpecting it, I carefully avoided,

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after this fatal converſation, ſpeaking to him of it.

This cruel day was the very epoch of all the misfortunes of my life; and the dreadful night which ſucceeded it ſtill repreſents to my memory a picture in ſuch terrible colours, that the remembrance alone would be ſufficient to preſerve me, for ever, from a paſſion which might cauſe ſuch torments. The happineſs it procures, always accompanied by fears and anxieties, is as uncertain as unſubſtantial; and, by an inevitable fatality, the charm of being beloved does not equal the grief of being no longer the obeject of ſuch a love. The pleaſure of my paſt felicity could never be compared to the exceſs of my deſpair. Certain of having for ever loſt the heart of lord Clarendon, it was not enough to bemoan his inconſtancy: I ſtill had to complain of his inſenſibility. "Undoubtedly," ſaid I to myſelf, "his friend, when relating to him my ſad hiſtory, did

not fail to describe my regret, my grief, and all the excess of the love which justifies me: he could not forget to tell him that, being cured, by experience and reflexion, of a delicacy which I myself condemn, I abjure, for ever, that caprice and susceptibility, the unhappy source of our divisions; and his cruel insensibility to my repentance, as well as to my love, abandons, renounces, and even refuses me his pity. No, no; such cruelty is unnatural; neither his heart nor his disposition are susceptible of it: a cause unknown to me must produce it.—Seduced, led astray by a new passion, lord Clarendon sacrifices me. It is too well known how much he loved me; perhaps they are weak enough to be afraid I may again be the object of that love, and they require this horrid desertion. He has promised and executes it, knowing that it will cause my death!"

Thus,

Thus, after having flattered myſelf with the moſt pleaſing hope, I aggravated the ſeverity of my deſtiny by overwhelming conjectures. Jealouſy heightened my torments, and prepared freſh ones, which were to ſurpaſs all that I had ſuffered. Lord Elby, ſtill more affected at my troubles, ſcarcely ever left me. Being always ſad and penſive, the only conſolation he offered was often weeping with me. His pity, which appeared to me to confirm my misfortunes, ſtill augmented them, and ſeemed to forewarn me that the doom pronounced againſt me was irrevocable. I thus interpreted his deep ſighs, his tears, attentions, and even his ſilence. I thought him no longer of any uſe to my deſigns: his viſits did not now intereſt me, his preſence afflicted and troubled me, and gratitude only obliged me to receive him. As my health was viſibly impaired, I always deſired him to leave me before nine o'clock at night, under the pretext that I

wiſhed to go to bed, and when he was gone, I opened my window and ſat down upon the balcony; and although it was then the coldeſt time of winter, I often remained there till two o'clock in the morning. As this balcony looked into the yard, I conſequently knew what time lord Clarendon came home, and I could ſee him coming out of the carriage. Beſides, when company came to ſup with him, I could eaſily diſtinguiſh, by the light of the flambeaus, every one he received. I paid particular attention in remarking the ladies; and being hid behind a Venetian blind, without any light near me, I could ſee every thing without being perceived. Jealouſy, whoſe activity perhaps equals that of the ſentiment which produced it, —this fatal paſſion, as violent as love itſelf—made me ſupport, with inconceivable perſeverance, the tedioufneſs of ſuch a ſad occupation; as I did not doubt but in the end it would furniſh me with ſome light

light upon the ſecret conduct of lord Clarendon, and upon the object who took poſſeſſion of my place in his heart. I indeed ſoon formed conjectures which immediately became violent ſuſpicions: I remarked, that among all the women who viſited lord Clarendon, one only obtained the diſtinction of being conducted to his carriage. I did not know her, but I obſerved ſhe had but one ſervant without livery, and I judged that her rank had nothing which merited particular reſpect. She appeared to be young and handſome, and that was ſufficient to aſſure me of my deſtiny. Lord Clarendon, in giving her his hand, frequently ſtopped a moment upon the ſteps, whiſpering to her, and ſometimes he waited in the yard to receive her.—Alas! how little did he think that I, drowned in tears, and overwhelmed with deſpair, thus eſpied, in the ſtillneſs of the night, his ſecret actions! The torment of jealouſy gave me freſh occaſion to

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ſpeak. I could learn nothing from my people, as they had no communication with thoſe of lord Clarendon; they only informed me that he frequently had muſic in the houſe, which it was impoſſible for me to hear, as lord Clarendon had changed his apartments for others at the oppoſite extremity of the houſe: but being previouſly told of the days when the concerts were to be given, I then obſerved that the unknown lady always came at theſe times, and I doubted not ſhe was the object of theſe entertainments. I could no longer be ſilent with lord Elby: I ſpoke to him, gave a perfect deſcription of the perſon who troubled my repoſe, and without confiding in him, I hazarded ſome queſtions: but comprehending my motives, he appeared afraid of anſwering; and as I inſiſted—"About what are you aſking me?" ſaid he. "The name alone of this woman will give you the ſevereſt blow."—"Nothing can aſtoniſh me," cried I. "Speak,

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I requeſt you to be candid."—"Well," replied he, "it is Ophelia."—"O heavens!" interrupted I: "a courtezan!"—I could ſay no more; a torrent of tears hindered me from ſpeaking. The earl, far from trying to conſole me, by his ſilence rather completely confirmed me of my misfortune. "Ah! what!" replied I, "is it Ophelia who ſucceeds me in the heart of lord Clarendon?"—"*Succeed you!*" replied the earl. "Ah! you certainly cannot think ſo: but this woman, as dangerous as celebrated, may eaſily acquire a temporary dominion."—"Yes, I know," interrupted I, "ſhe poſſeſſes wit as well as beauty, and likewiſe the moſt ſeducing talents: but how can a perſon of ſuch a character inſpire a noble paſſion? and how can the ſiſters of lord Clarendon approve ſuch a conduct? For they authorize it by their preſence; they are witneſſes of it, and without doubt confidants of ſuch a criminal intrigue; and whilſt they

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are blaming the behaviour of their unfortunate ſiſter-in-law, they are preſent at all the entertainments their brother gives to his miſtreſs. I even ſaw the aunt of lord Clarendon, the auſtere lady Nevill, come to theſe ſcandalous ſuppers!"—At theſe words, lord Elby, reſuming the diſcourſe, proteſted to me that he did not think Ophelia was yet the miſtreſs of lord Clarendon, and that they had but very lately began to ſuſpect the ſentiments of the latter. He added, that thoſe ſuppers appeared to be given ſolely for the amuſement of the ladies who compoſed the ſociety of lord Clarendon; that Ophelia, being received and made welcome, in ſeveral houſes, as a woman of talents, was admitted only on that account; that ſhe behaved with great exterior decency, and ſeemed to be there only for the purpoſe of ſinging and playing upon the harpſichord; that thus, far from her ſeeming to receive the homage of men, it was ſhe alone who

rendered

rendered all those evenings agreeable; and that those entertainments only appeared to be given to the ladies, who were amused by her talents. "However," continued the earl, "I have for a long time been displeased at these suppers, and discontinued being present at them." Such an unsatisfactory explanation only irritated my grief; and that I might give myself up to it without restraint, I soon invented a pretext to get rid of lord Elby. I was more than eight days without receiving him, and I found a fatal pleasure in giving complete, uninterrupted sway to my tears and despair. I represented to myself lord Clarendon, this sole beloved object, rejecting, sacrificing, forgetting me, for the purpose of entirely abandoning himself to the most debasing passion; I thought I saw him at the feet of my rival, as affectionate and happy as I had formerly beheld him at mine: he appeared to me the most cruel man; and notwithstanding his inhumanity, inconstancy,

conſtancy, and all his injuſtice, I could neither conſole myſelf, nor even think of it. What a ſtrange ſentiment love is! It cannot ariſe but from eſteem, and yet it ſurvives it. If I had not thought lord Clarendon even more affectionate than he ſeemed amiable to me, I certainly ſhould never have loved him; and as ſoon as I ſaw him deprived of the qualities which attracted my affection, I was undeceived, but not conſoled. Noble and ſacred Friendſhip! if thou goeſt aſtray in thy choice, at leaſt Reaſon does not in vain offer thee her ſalutary influence! When we open our eyes upon the conduct of an unfaithful friend, we may ſhed tears at having been deceived by him, but he is no more the object of our love. This is a ſentiment which always exiſted, and ever will exiſt; and when it is approved by reaſon, it is as unalterable and pure as virtue which produced it. Amongſt all the grievances which racked my heart, I experienced a very

very bitter one—that of having for a long time neglected talents in which lord Clarendon took particular delight. Jealouſy gave me the deſire of ſurpaſſing my rival. This emulation, deſtitute of hope, could only divert, but not conſole me. I made my harpſichord be tuned, and again took up my pencils: I was continually at work, and even lord Elby's preſence could not prevent me giving myſelf entirely up to theſe occupations. One day, when he was admiring a picture I had juſt finiſhed, I aſked him, bluſhing, if he did not know a woman who painted better. "No," anſwered he; "Ophelia does not paint better, and does not deſign ſo well."—"Ah!" replied I ſighing, "you anſwer according to my thoughts, but your friendſhip perhaps flatters me."—"It is impoſſible," ſaid he, "to have the deſign of deceiving you; and if ever I became guilty of ſuch a crime, far from its being the effect of a premeditated intention, it would

would only be the result of a train of errors and mistakes." This answer appeared to me very natural, but I was far from comprehending the true meaning of it.

I always continued to spend part of the night at my window, and I observed, with pleasure, that Ophelia no more appeared. I spoke to the earl of it, who told me she was at Bath. The joy this news gave me did not last long; for a few days after I learnt that lord Clarendon had also gone to Bath, and would remain there a month. This confirmation of my misfortune completely overwhelmed me. In the excess of my grief I successively formed a thousand projects, which overturned each other. At last I was prompted with a violent desire of visiting lord Clarendon's study during his absence. It was situated upon the first floor, near a little garden adjoining the hall, and in which lord Clarendon always studied, even before he changed his apartments. He never received any one in it,

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and in a more happy time I was the only perſon permitted to enter it. I even poſſeſſed a key of it; and I imagined, as there were inſide bolts, they would not have had the precaution of changing the locks; I was therefore determined to go in that very night. I had ſeen my picture hung up in that cloſet, and I anxiouſly wiſhed to know if it was ſtill there. When I thought all the ſervants were faſt aſleep, I took a dark lantern, pulled off my ſhoes, and, with no other clothes on than a corſet and a muſlin petticoat, I went ſoftly down ſtairs, and was obliged to go through the hall, which I found open. Being come into it, I examined, with curioſity, every thing it contained, and I obſerved, ſighing, a harpſichord which I had never before ſeen. I eaſily gueſſed it had been been placed there for Ophelia, and my eyes filled with tears. Continuing to look round me, I perceived a large picture; and upon approaching it, I recollected my

own portrait, which had been taken out of the ſtudy and placed there. This ſight aſtoniſhed and ſurpriſed me. I indeed at firſt experienced a little joy; for I thought that lord Clarendon's expoſing my picture to the view of every one, at leaſt proved that he had not entirely forſaken me, but preſerved his eſteem for me. I gazed at this picture as if I had never ſeen it: I could have wiſhed it had a degree of perfection which I in vain ſought for. I diſcovered, with ſorrow, a multitude of faults, but at that time I found it more ugly; and I was afflicted by thinking, that the little agreeableneſs of this figure was entirely effaced when compared to the charms of Ophelia. At length I advanced towards the ſtudy; with a trembling hand put the key into the lock, opened the door, and entered. The firſt object which ſtruck my attention was a picture covered with a veil, when a ſad preſentiment but too well announced to me what I was

going to diſcover! Notwithſtanding my trouble and grief, I however remarked, with ſome pleaſure, that they had not ventured to put that myſterious picture in the place which my portrait had occupied. I ſorrowfully gazed at the empty ſpace above lord Clarendon's bureau, which was fixed in the ſame place, but in ſuch a manner as the new picture could not be readily ſeen. In one inſtant I made all theſe obſervations; for love, almoſt always ingenious and clear-ſighted, often perceives, at a ſingle glance, every thing fit to excite its jealouſy, or capable of ſweetening its bitterneſs. I remained a moment motionleſs, as if to recover all my ſtrength: I then approached the picture, and with as much emotion as curioſity drew aſide the curtain which covered the painting, and ſaw a portait I could not help recollecting—it was really that of Ophelia! I preſumed it was ſo—I was aſſured of it: but complete conviction cauſed me

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the greateſt ſurpriſe!—Ophelia, repreſenting a Muſe, was crowned with laurels and roſes: ſhe was playing upon the lyre, and had at her feet the different attributes of arts. This figure appeared to me of incomparable beauty; and far from ſuppoſing ſhe was flattered, I could not help thinking that the original had perhaps ſtill greater charms. In the midſt of this ſorrowful contemplation I caſt my eyes upon two little water-colour paintings which were near the portrait. The name of *Ophelia*, written at the bottom of theſe pictures, made me examine them attentively. One repreſented Cupid, ſitting with his quiver upon his knees, holding, in the left hand, a pallet, and the other tracing upon canvas, with the point of one of his arrows, the profile of lord Clarendon.—The ſecond painting repreſented the Graces, laying a veil upon the altar of Love. Through this ſlight and tranſparent veil was ſeen, at the foot of the altar, a neſt

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placed upon the attributes of love, and in which two doves were repoſing. Notwithſtanding jealouſy, which made me exaggerate the advantages that Ophelia poſſeſſed, I however thought that I painted as well as her; "at leaſt," ſaid I, "lord Clarendon ſhall no longer admire theſe works of my rival; and when he believes that he ſtill contemplates them, his prejudice will procure me the happineſs of even attracting his attention." In pronouncing theſe words, I unhooked the two pictures, and took them with me out of the ſtudy. I quickly went up ſtairs, without making the leaſt noiſe in my room; and although it was three o'clock in the morning, I immediately began to execute the deſign I had formed, by drawing the outlines of the two paintings, which I endeavoured to copy with all poſſible exactneſs; and at ſix o'clock, before any one was up, I replaced the originals in the ſtudy. The following days I did not fetch

them till about half an hour before day-break; and it being then the month of April, I only worked at them from five till ſix o'clock in the morning, that I might not run the riſk of meeting with ſome of the ſervants: but at the end of twenty-three days my copies were finiſhed, and with ſuch ſcrupulous exactneſs, that it was impoſſible to diſtinguiſh them from the originals. Then taking a pen, "Good God!" cried I, "what name am I now going to trace! O, cruel huſband! under what diſguiſe you will ſee this writing, which was formerly ſo dear to you!"—In ſpeaking thus, bitter tears inundated my face. I wrote at the bottom of my copies the fatal name of *Ophelia*, and I perfectly imitated her ſignature. I afterwards unfaſtened the paintings from the frames they were in, put mine in their ſtead, placed the originals in a portfolio I kept, and took the two pictures I had done into lord Clarendon's ſtudy. Sitting up late at night, and ſo

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many agitations of mind, completely exhauſted my ſtrength. Accuſtomed, for a long time, to ſit up almoſt every night, I had abſolutely loſt the want of ſleep. I in vain attempted to cloſe my eyes, by remaining the greateſt part of the day in bed, for I generally did not get up till ſeven in the evening. By this mode of life I had the advantage of enjoying entire ſolitude. For more than four months I had received lord Elby only five or ſix times, and it was in vain his complaining of it: his company no longer afforded me any conſolation, and I found it impoſſible to relinquiſh a mode of life which aſſured to me perfect liberty.

Lord Clarendon returned from Bath after a month's abſence, and Ophelia ſoon appeared again, and oftener than ever. One evening I ſaw lord Clarendon go out with her in a coach and ſix horſes, and I heard he was taking her to a country-houſe he had juſt bought, which was cer-

tainly for the purpoſe of enjoying her company with leſs reſtraint. My health at laſt ſunk under ſuch violent agitations. One day, getting out of bed, I found myſelf ſo ill, that I was immediately obliged to lye down again, when one of my women propoſed ſitting by me, but I refuſed her attendance. "Indeed, my lady," ſaid ſhe to me, "You are killing yourſelf."—"How ſo?" replied I.—"Yes," ſaid ſhe, "by thus ſitting up every night, and for ſuch a length of time!—and—without any reaſon—for no one obliges my lady. All thoſe precautions are unneceſſary, and may rather give reaſon to form conjectures. On the contrary, if my lady had a little more confidence, things would go on the better for it." I abſolutely did not comprehend the meaning of this diſcourſe, and I aſked an explanation. "Good God!" anſwered this woman, "one has eyes and ears—It is very mortifying to me to ſee my lady ſo continually miſtruſtful—with

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what care ſhe ſhuts herſelf up at night in her chamber.—But of what uſe can it be? It is not difficult to gueſs the truth. For my part, I have ſeen my lady ten times going up or down ſtairs in the middle of the night, during my lord's abſence." At theſe words, imagining that this woman, having watched me, had diſcovered the ſtealth of the two pictures, I then thought it ſufficient to recommend diſcretion; adding, that the next day I would ſpeak to her more particularly upon that ſubject. I felt my head ſo heavy and embarraſſed, that I was abſolutely unfit to enter into a longer explanation. That ſame night an ardent fever completely exhauſted my ſtrength. A phyſician was ſent for, who immediately warned lord Clarendon of the danger I was in. He came, and found me in the moſt frightful ſtate of delirium: he watched me, and ſat up ſeveral nights at the head of my bed, along with lord Elby. Alas! I could not enjoy his at-

tentions, being without the uſe of my ſenſes, and almoſt without life. Fortune even deprived me of this conſolation, which might have perhaps again united two hearts, at laſt enlightened by gratitude and compaſſion. Meantime a violent criſis decided my fate, and the phyſician ſoon anſwered for my being cured. Lord Clarendon, from that time, quitted his uſual place at the head of my bed, and remained at the other end of my room, hid by the curtains. When the return of my feeble reaſon permitted me to form a thought and a deſire, the beloved name of lord Clarendon was the firſt expreſſion which proceeded from my lips. Lord Elby being then near my bed, heard me, and immediately anſwering me, "Will you," ſaid he, "ſee lord Clarendon?"—"No, no," cried I, as loud as I could; "do not let him come; my preſence can only be odious to him." Theſe fatal words, dictated by grief, were but too well heard,

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and the blindeſt prejudice interpreted them to my ruin. Lord Clarendon went out of my room without my knowing he was in it, and did not return again. This cruel deſertion deeply impreſſed my heart with a reſentment mixed with deſpair and indignation—an emotion which was the moſt violent and bitter I had yet felt. Reſtrained by the preſence of ſome of my family, whom my dangerous ſtate had brought round me, I durſt not ſpeak, and in a ſtupid and dull ſilence I gazed at lord Elby. My melancholy and fixed looks ſufficiently expreſſed the trouble of my heart, and I thought I read upon his pale and inauſpicious countenance that he comprehended this mute and ſorrowful confidence. Thus was I an unfortunate victim, ſnatched from death, and reſtored to life but with new reaſons to hate it the more. My health was not reſtored, but the fever left me. I declared myſelf that I was cured, that I might be left alone,

and I made my door be ſhut as uſual. That ſame day I was quite aſtoniſhed to ſee two new waiting-women, inſtead of thoſe who had attended me ſince my marriage; and the oldeſt of them, who was countenanced by one of my ſiſters-in-law, (lady Bolton,) was ſent to me by her. It was the very ſame perſon with whom, the day preceding my illneſs, I had the converſation I have before mentioned, and of which I had then no recollection; for the extreme weakneſs of my ſpirits at once took away my memory and the faculty of reflexion. I aſked where my women were gone to, and was anſwered that they had left me; that one of them had entered the ſervice of lady Bolton, and the other that of lady Nevill, the aunt of lord Clarendon. This proceeding appeared to me ſingular and ſurpriſing, but my apathy did not permit me to feel the conſequences of it. However the earl having next day come to ſee me, I queſtioned

queſtioned him about it, when he appeared aſtoniſhed, became penſive, and anſwered me, that this action ſeemed inexplicable to him. I ſpoke no more upon this ſubject; and not even feeling a want of complaining, being in that exhauſted ſtate when the exceſs of grief deprives one even of the ſad hope of finding relief in lamenting, I kept the moſt profound ſilence, and did not once pronounce the name of lord Clarendon. Several days elapſed in this manner: I was more dejected than grieved; my ideas were unconnected and confuſed; I had not power to arrange them, nor ſtrength enough to be deeply afflicted. Stupid, or rather annihilated, my ſoul had no longer the energy of experiencing thoſe keen griefs, thoſe violent tranſports, which ſo often racked it. Like thoſe patients whoſe ſufferings are almoſt at an end, when their wounds are incurable, the wound of my heart became mortal, and reduced me to that ſtate of annihilation

wherein we loſe the ſentiment of our miſfortunes, and even of our exiſtence.

I was ſtill in that ſad languiſhing ſtate, when one morning I ſaw lord Clarendon ſuddenly come into my room. The ſight of an object, always ſo dear, immediately produced in me the moſt aſtoniſhing revolution: I felt myſelf revived; my ideas were not ſo confuſed: it appeared to me as if I was getting out of a long and painful ſleep; and my ſoul, recovering all its faculties, regained, at the ſame time, a ray of hope. Lord Clarendon, after having carefully ſhut the door, approached my arm-chair. When I ſaw him near me, I wanted to ruſh towards him: but my weakneſs could not ſupport ſuch a violent emotion, and I fell back almoſt ſenſeleſs, and ſuffocated by a torrent of tears. He then looked at me with a compoſed air, and ſaid, in a tone which chilled me to the ſoul, "I wiſhed to ſpeak to you, but you do not appear diſpoſed to hear me; I will therefore

therefore return another day." Let one imagine, if poſſible, what ſuch compoſure and diſcourſe muſt have produced upon a heart already ſo much wounded! Never did a cauſe produce ſuch a ſudden effect. Had I been ſuſceptible of hatred, I would then have given way to it with as much tranſport as I had experienced in love. Lord Clarendon now appeared to me the moſt ungrateful and inhuman object; and the exceſs of diſdain at laſt quelled that of love. A violent but concentred indignation ſucceeded thoſe tender emotions which at firſt agitated me, and after a moment's ſilence I told him, with the greateſt coolneſs, that I was ready to hear him; when he addreſſed me in theſe terrible words: "You now ſee me for the laſt time. I will neither importune nor command you: but my own honour and your's being concerned, obliges me to this proceeding. You have fled from ſociety, which vindicates itſelf and accuſes you: they ſay you are the

lover of lord Elby."—"Believe me," replied I, with the greateſt unconcern, "you ſhould try to find me guilty of other crimes, for this infamous and aſtoniſhing calumny is the moſt improbable you could invent. It will be contradicted even by all your people as well as mine, who will tell you, that for more than ſix months I have not five times received lord Elby——"—"Yes, *in the day-time*," interrupted lord Clarendon with a bitter ſmile. At theſe words I remained motionleſs, with my mouth half open, and my eyes fixed upon him.—"I came," continued he, "with an indulgence which is ſeldom to be met with in my ſituation. I did not expect to find in you ſuch intrepid aſſurance; and ſo much effrontery merits no forbearance. Know, then, madam, that I am perfectly acquainted with your conduct, which I have for a long time ſuſpected: but I have now obtained the moſt complete proofs of your errors. Your women, full of indignation

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at your conduct, have quitted your ſervice, and depoſe againſt you: your people and mine confirm their evidence, and all agree in ſaying that you only baniſhed your lover during the day, that you might receive him at night. Six ſervants of this houſe, who eſpied you, have ſeen you, while I was at Bath, twenty times upon the ſtaircaſe, in the middle of the night, holding a lantern in one hand, and a key in the other, coming down to the hall leading to the garden, where you went to open the little door next the ſtreet: there you admitted your lover.—You ſee," continued he, "I am well informed."—"O, prodigy of ingratitude!" cried I.—"Suppreſs," interrupted lord Clarendon, "ſuppreſs theſe hypocritical exclamations; they are abſolutely uſeleſs. I have been paſſionately fond of you, and your perfidy cannot baniſh this remembrance. I do not, however, wiſh to make a diſcovery of what would at once diſhonour her who bears

bears my name, and the unfaithful friend who formerly ſaved my life, and who is my brother-in-law. Let us ſeparate without complaining and without noiſe: chooſe any of my eſtates where you wiſh to live; you will there enjoy perfect liberty, and the ſame fortune you have here." In finiſhing theſe words, lord Clarendon immediately leaving me, went out haſtily. I remained petrified with indignation and ſurpriſe. I had not yet thought it poſſible to attack my reputation; ſuch an idea had never preſented itſelf to my mind. The exceſs of my paſſion for lord Clarendon ſo completely baniſhed a fear upon that point, that even error and calumny, of which I was then the victim, produced no impreſſion whatever upon me. Beſides, I had a certain means of juſtifying myſelf, by ſhewing Ophelia's two pictures: I could produce the moſt complete proof, not only of my innocence, but of the delicacy and generoſity of the moſt tender but too neglected ſentiment.

ſentiment. I was then without fear and uneaſineſs; I only experienced a violent reſentment. I was ſo ſhocked at the ingratitude and hard-heartedneſs of lord Clarendon, that I ſhould have thought him deſpicable at that moment, had I imagined I could ſtill love him. I could not form the deſign of diſcovering and proving to him the truth, but for the purpoſe of vindicating myſelf and of confounding him. Lord Clarendon had ſcarcely left me, when I ſent for lord Elby. I gave that order in ſuch a proud and commanding tone, that the ſervant who received it gazed at me with ſurpriſe. "Yes," repeated I, "go and tell lord Elby, from me, to come immediately; and if you meet my lord's people, tell them your meſſage." I would have wiſhed that lord Clarendon, before his doubts were diſſipated, ſhould be acquainted with this proceeding; for I experienced a particular deſire to provoke him, which I would have

have done with the greateſt ſatisfaction. Lord Elby made no delay, but came running with eagerneſs. The moment I heard his voice, I went ſo far as the antichamber to meet him; and I affected, before my people, to receive him with demonſtrations of friendſhip, which they could never have perceived in me before, when the earl, confounded and ſurpriſed, looked at me with aſtoniſhment. I conducted him into my cloſet, and there, without any preamble, informed him, in a few words, of the manner in which I had ſubſtituted my copies in the room of Ophelia's water-colour paintings. He was ignorant of this particular, at which he was deeply affected; and raiſing his eyes, full of tears, towards heaven, "O, incomparable woman!" cried he.—"Do not interrupt me," ſaid I, "but ſee and know what is the recompence of ſo much love and fidelity." I then quickly related to him what had juſt paſſed between lord Clarendon

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and me. After having liſtened to this recital, the earl, all the while ſtanding up, experienced ſuch an emotion as obliged him to ſit down; and looking attentively at me, "Well," ſaid he, in a faltering voice, "what are you determined to do?" "To juſtify myſelf this very day, and never to pardon——"—"*Never!* Can it be true?"—"Do not doubt it. I could, with diſdain, ſee lord Clarendon at my feet: I have no more love nor eſteem for him. You, whom he injures as well as myſelf, go and tell him what I have related to you: carry thoſe two pictures of his miſtreſs; let him have them again, and burn the copies which I had the weakneſs to paint. Go and tell him I renounce him for ever, that I am going to haſten my departure, and I ſhall ſoon leave this odious and fatal houſe, never to return." In ſaying theſe words, I gave the earl Ophelia's two paintings, which he received with extreme trouble, ſtammering ſome words I

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did not underſtand; and being ſtrongly urged by me to loſe no time in executing his commiſſion, he immediately left me. As ſoon as I found myſelf alone, my ſentiments ſuddenly changed. I experienced the moſt violent agitation, and the tenderest ſenſibility ſucceeded my anger: my heart ſtrongly palpitated, my eyes filled with tears, and I could not remain in one place. I every moment expected the earl, or rather I expected lord Clarendon himſelf. The whole evening was ſpent in this manner. I imagined the earl could not ſee lord Clarendon, who certainly would not receive him; and I concluded with ſorrow, but without any extreme uneaſineſs, that I ſhould not, perhaps, before two or three days, have the anſwer I ſo ardently wiſhed for. The following day, in the morning, I received a note from lady Nevill, announcing her deſire to viſit me. I wiſhed for advice—I felt I ſtood in need of it: but thoſe of friendſhip could alone inſtruct and guide

guide me, and lady Nevill had not any quality fit to attract confidence. Her mind was as contracted as her heart was inſenſible: ſhe piqued herſelf upon being auſtere, and conſidered mild indulgence as a kind of defect. Proud at having never loved any thing, ſhe thought herſelf out of the power of paſſion becauſe ſhe never inſpired any; and her ſoul was ſuſceptible of none. A ſtrict obſerver of every kind of decorum, ſcrupulouſly attentive in fulfilling the ſmalleſt duties of ſociety, her principal maxim was always to ſacrifice every thing to cuſtom and opinion. She had leſs averſion for vice than apprehenſion for reproach. Punctual in all her proceedings, ſhe thought that the empty forms of etiquette and ceremony could ſupply the place of ſentiment. With this diſpoſition, ſhe acquired an excellent reputation, and never had a friend: but enjoying a great importance, ſhe obtained what ſhe ſought, and did not regret

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a bleſſing ſhe was not capable of appreciating. I was acquainted with her, but did not eſteem her; however, being the aunt of lord Clarendon, I was obliged to receive her viſit. She came to me in a ceremonious manner, by which ſhe intended to expreſs compaſſion and concern. After ſome compliments, ſhe ſaid, that although I had very much neglected her, my preſent ſituation made her eaſily forget my faults, and that ſhe came to offer me all the conſolation and ſervice that depended upon her. This diſcourſe was charming; and it would certainly have excited my gratitude, had it been expreſſed in another manner. But how eaſy it was to diſcover that lady Nevill, guided by decorum, only thought of fulfilling a duty, and acted ſolely for worldly conſiderations. Her manner, the ſound of her voice, her ſtudied deportment, in ſhort altogether baniſhed from me theſe involuntary effuſions, which in grief ſo eaſily overcome one.—Unhappy,

happy, truly unhappy he, who cannot excite the confidence of a perſon in affliction! He muſt have upon his face the cruel ſtamp of inſenſibility. In vain will he ſtrive, by affected expreſſions, to conceal the hardneſs of his heart: his countenance, his appearance will betray him: whilſt a look, a ſingle word, inſpired by a compaſſionate heart, can obtain, in a moment, all the mildeſt effuſions of friendſhip! Of what uſe to me would have been, with lady Nevill, a confidence which ſhe neither deſired nor deſerved? I would have been obliged to relate the particulars of my life—that is to ſay, of my ſentiments; and as ſhe could not have comprehended them, would ſhe have believed me? No; certainly ſhe would have ſeen in that recital only an awkward compoſition of artifice and falſehood. Beſides, as I thought lord Clarendon, being informed and perſuaded of the truth, or at leaſt very nearly ſo, I then reckoned it ſufficient to anſwer,

anſwer, in a ſhort and indifferent manner, that having nothing to reproach myſelf with, I had nothing to fear. At theſe words lady Nevill being extremely ſhocked, malignantly began a long detail of calumnies, of which I was the object. "Such are," continued ſhe, "the injurious reports which are ſpread. I warn you of it, that you may endeavour to ſeek the means of contradicting them; and I ſee but one—that is, to be reconciled with a mild and indulgent huſband, whom it will be ſo much the more eaſy for you to regain, as he has no children, and wiſhes for ſome, he being the laſt of his name. This is a ſufficient reaſon to make all the family concur in effecting ſuch a union."—"I do not know, madam," replied I, "if lord Clarendon's family wiſh him to have children; but I, indeed, ſenſibly feel the misfortune of not having any. In a more happy period of my life, the ſweet name of mother was wanting to my felicity;

and

and that title alone would now undoubtedly indemnify me for all I have loſt——"—"But," interrupted lady Nevill, "if you wiſh to be reconciled with my nephew, you muſt firſt endeavour to juſtify yourſelf before him."—"To juſtify myſelf!" replied I. "Who accuſes me? bribed ſervants?"—At this expreſſion lady Nevill bluſhed exceſſively, and fury ſparkled in her eyes, whilſt I ſtopped. She appeared as if ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak, but confuſion ſubduing her anger, ſhe could not utter a ſyllable. "Confeſs, madam," continued I, "that ſuch evidence can only inſpire the greateſt contempt."—"It is the world, madam," cried lady Nevill, ſtammering, "it is the whole world that accuſe you."—"The world!" replied I: "For more than a year I have forſaken it; and being totally ſeparated from it, how can it maintain the right of judging me, when I am no longer in its preſence, and

it

it cannot know the leaſt particular of my conduct? In ſhort, madam, I have no pardon to requeſt. Some ought, perhaps, rather to aſk mine: but I do not require it. I ſhall, with ſubmiſſion and mildneſs, receive lord Clarendon if he returns to me. In my preſent ſituation, it is my duty to wait for him, but not to make the firſt advances. I ſhall neither importune him nor humble myſelf: ſuch is my final and irrevocable determination." Lady Nevill then getting up, ſharply ſaid, "Ponder it well; reflect upon the many obligations of a wife towards a huſband, to whom ſhe owes her fortune and exiſtence." —"There was a time," replied I, "when I was beloved: this is the only remembrance which can yet excite my gratitude, and I know of no other obligation." At this anſwer lady Nevill, notwithſtanding her invariable politeneſs, could not refrain from giving me a haughty look; after

which ſhe made a profound courteſy, and left me to go and boaſt of her fine and unſucceſsful proceedings with me.

In the meantime, not hearing any thing of lord Elby, I wrote to him, requeſting to know if he had ſeen lord Clarendon. Inſtead of writing to me, the earl ſent a verbal meſſage, ſaying he would anſwer me the following morning. Under that expectation I did not cloſe my eyes the whole night. But what was my ſurpriſe upon getting up, when I was informed that lord Clarendon had ſet out before day-break upon a very long journey, and that they were perfectly ignorant where he was gone to. This news quite depreſſed me, and made me but too well foreſee all the horror of my deſtiny. I could by no means allow myſelf to believe that lord Clarendon would retain the ſmalleſt doubt of my innocence, if the earl had been able to execute my commiſſion. I then imagined that lord Clarendon had obſtinately

refuſed to hear him; that this refuſal, accompanied, perhaps, by ſome inſult, had occaſioned a duel, and that the unfortunate earl had been the victim of it.—The precipitate flight of lord Clarendon, and the myſteriouſneſs of his journey, ſeemed to authorize this horrid conjecture, which immediately occurred to my mind, and, upon reflexion, appeared certain. At one glance I beheld the extreme depth of the abyſs wherein this event would plunge me: lord Elby, no longer in exiſtence, carried with him, into the tomb, my juſtification; and I, the ſole cauſe of this dreadful cataſtrophe, having loſt a faithful friend, whom I could not lament and bewail without ſtill adding to my opprobrium and confirming my diſhonour. "Ah! if it be true," cried I, ſhedding a torrent of tears, "I will deſpiſe injuſtice and ſhame: I ſhall exult more in my grief than in my innocence. O, thou only friend whom fortune granted me! I ſwear to thy memory an eternal mourning;

mourning; and having no other concern but for thy loſs, I ſhall, without conſtraint, deſpiſe the vain clamours of the world, and I ſhall only bemoan thy fatal lot." I had ſcarcely uttered theſe words, when a perſon entering my room, brought me a letter. I ſtarted, upon recollecting lord Elby's hand-writing: I was in doubt whether this letter would expel or confirm my fears, and with a quaking heart I opened, and found it contained the following words:

'I have ſeen lord Clarendon, and he is 'juſt ſet out for ſix months!—This is tell-'ing you enough. My heart is extremely 'ſenſible of all that yours muſt ſuffer; 'and my only conſolation is in thinking 'that your ſoul is no leſs elevated than 'tender. May ſo much ingratitude at laſt 'open your eyes! This is what I preſume 'to expect from time and your own 'reaſon.

'I think that the only proof of attach-
'ment I have now to give you is to ba-
'niſh myſelf for ſome years. I leave
'England: I am going to France, and
'thence to Italy, and I ſet out im-
'mediately. Adieu, madam: deign to
'pity me for not having been of more ſer-
'vice to you: but reſt aſſured, that where-
'ever I may be, I ſhall always be ready to
'obey your commands, and to evince to
'you the unalterable ſentiments of reſpect
'and admiration with which I ever am—'

After having read this epiſtle, I remained petrified. The exceſs of my ſurpriſe rendered me ſtupid and almoſt inſenſible. This letter diſſipated and annihilated for ever all the illuſions of my imagination, all the ſecret hopes of my heart. Lord Clarendon had received proofs of my tenderneſs for him, and conſequently of my innocence, and yet he perſiſted in the cruel deſign of flying from me, diſregarding and abandon-

abandoning me, almoſt dying, and diſhonoured in the eyes of mankind! Quite overwhelmed by ſuch a terrible and unforeſeen ſtroke, I had not ſufficient energy to give myſelf up to indignation, or even to deſpair: my exhauſted courage left in my oppreſſed and dejected heart no more than a painful ſentiment, which ſeemed to proceed from terror. I did not weep, but, trembling and ſhocked, with my eyes fixed upon the ground, I was plunged in the moſt ſullen reverie; and now and then ſtarting, I only repeated theſe words, *Good God! what will become of me?*

In the evening I was informed that Mr. Summers (lord Clarendon's man of buſineſs) wanted to ſpeak to me. Gueſſing that he was charged with ſome commiſſion for me, I deſired them to let him come in, when he immediately appeared, and without ceremony gave me a note from lord Clarendon, containing theſe words:

'I desire you will leave London without delay. Choose which of my estates you wish to live in, and inform Mr. Summers of it, who will arrange every thing relative to your departure and journey.'

This note renewing all my grief with more violence than ever, drew me from the lethargy wherein I was plunged. This writing, these lines once so dear to me, revived in my heart the most forlorn reflexions. I compared this cruel note to other affecting letters, dictated by the love of which I had received such convincing proofs; and this new mark of so frightful a change in my situation completed all my misfortunes. The irresistible tenderness with which the sight of this writing inspired me suspended my resentment and anger. Through a flood of tears I earnestly gazed at the fatal letter; and without reading it again, I beheld the characters,

ters, thoſe adored characters, which had hitherto excited in me ſuch delightful emotions! Even at that moment I felt pleaſure in contemplating them.—At laſt, upon Mr. Summers requeſting an anſwer from me, I recovered, dried up my tears, and telling him that I ſhould ſet out the following day for Derbyſhire, I diſmiſſed him. When he was gone out of my room, I found myſelf ſo ill that they ſent for a phyſician, who remained with me the greateſt part of the night: however at day-break I fell into a ſlumber, followed very ſoon after by a profound ſleep, which at laſt gave ſome intermiſſion to my pains. When I awoke, I heard that Mr. Summers had ſpent the night making all the neceſſary preparations for my departure, and that every thing was ready. I aroſe, and was told that all my people refuſed to go with me, becauſe they did not wiſh, they ſaid, to live in the country. They added, that Mr. Summers would accommodate me

with his ſervant during the journey, and that he was gone in ſearch of a waiting-woman for me. I aſked if Thomſon would likewiſe leave me, (this was one of my people whom I liked beſt,) when they anſwered that he had gone out. A moment after I ſaw him come in, accompanied by a young woman who was unknown to me. "Here is, my lady," ſaid he, "a waiting-woman whom I bring to you: ſhe is my ſiſter, and will ſerve you well."—"But you, Thomſon," replied I, "will you alſo quit me?"—"Never," anſwered he, and turned aſide to hide ſome tears that ſtarted from his eyes, which made mine flow likewiſe. Wiſhing to be alone, I beckoned to him to leave me, which he accordingly did: then reflecting upon my ſituation, and the inconceivable cruelty of lord Clarendon, the moſt ſtrange and extravagant thought ſuddenly came into my head, and I conſidered it as the moſt ſatisfactory; for my imagination, continually

nually creating chimeras, ingeniouſly takes advantage of every circumſtance or appearance which can give them the ſhadow of probability. "No," cried I; "ſo much injuſtice and cruelty cannot be—no; lord Clarendon is not ſuch a monſter. All this is only a trial: he wiſhes to know to what pitch I can carry my love, and if reſentment be capable of entirely extinguiſhing it in my heart. Perhaps he alſo wiſhes to juſtify me in an open manner before my accuſers, and all this exterior ſhew of rigour and ſeparation is perhaps neceſſary for the execution of his plan. But he is not gone; he has not abandoned me, I am certain of it. He is here, in this very houſe—yes, I no longer doubt it—he is waiting in his ſtudy for me: he knows I always kept the key—that I have made uſe of it; and he has not aſked this key again from me! He imagines, that before I ſet out I will return to this ſtudy, were it only for the purpoſe of ſeeing if he has ſub-

ſtituted Ophelia's pictures in the room of thoſe I myſelf painted: he knows me too well not to be aſſured that I will take this laſt ſtep. I ſhall find him there, perhaps, with all his relations aſſembled: he wiſhes that this whole houſe ſhould ſee me come down with a key in my hand, croſs the hall, and open the ſtudy—for theſe are the things which give riſe to my being calumniated—then he will ſpeak publicly of the fact which juſtifies me, and he will ſhew the two copies of the pictures, together with the originals! O heavens! if it ſhould be ſo, I ſhall then expire with joy! How can I ſupport ſuch a revolution!"

In the midſt of this delirium Thomſon returned to tell me that the poſt-horſes were arrived and put to the carriage. "Let us go," cried I: "my lot will now be decided!" At theſe words I drew from my pocket the key of lord Clarendon's ſtudy, and went out of my room in a ſtate impoſſible to deſcribe. Scarcely recovered from

from a long and dangerous illneſs, my weakneſs was ſo great, that I could not go down ſtairs without being ſupported and almoſt carried by two perſons. I was obliged to paſs by lord Clarendon's apartment, which, as I have before mentioned, was upon the firſt floor. When I was oppoſite his door, I recovered all my ſtrength: I got rid of my conductors, and haſtily entered the hall. I caſt my eyes upon the wainſcot where I had ſeen my portrait, but it was no longer there! I then advanced with tottering ſteps towards the fatal ſtudy, opened the door, and entered. Alas! I only found it a frightful deſert: I there in vain ſought the cruel author of my troubles! At laſt I approached the little pictures. I could not miſtake the originals for my copies, as I had certain marks to diſtinguiſh them, which were imperceptible to other eyes, but infallible to mine. I gazed at them. What was my ſurpriſe, upon recollecting

the two paintings of Ophelia! I fell upon a chair, and remained ſome moments in a perfect ſtate of annihilation. I afterwards wandered in this ſtudy like one out of her ſenſes: I went inſenſibly towards the bureau, ſtopped, and ſaw near the writing-deſk a great many letters, carefully ſpread and arranged upon one another. A ſmall alabaſter figure, repreſenting *Myſtery*, was placed upon this pile of papers, and kept it upon the table. I had ſeen, and correctly imitated Ophelia's ſignature, therefore it was not difficult for me to know her writing again. I then took the key of the ſtudy out of the door, and returning to the bureau, removed the figure of *Myſtery*, and put in its place, upon Ophelia's letters, the fatal key, which I for ever abandoned; after which, burſting into tears, and mortified to the heart, I went out of the ſtudy. In going through the hall I met one of lord Clarendon's ſervants, who aſked me, in an inſolent and jeering tone, what I wanted.

This

This queſtion, and the manner in which it was aſked, produced in me the firſt emotion of humiliation that I had ever felt. I ſaw that I was no longer regarded but as a ſtranger, and as an object of contempt in this houſe, from which the moſt odious ingratitude baniſhed me for ever; and I experienced that one may bluſh with ſhame without being guilty. I called Thomſon, who conducted, or rather carried me, towards the coach. I found the doors of the court open, entered it, and ſaw a number of people, attracted by that curioſity which unfortunate perſons naturally inſpire. They haſtened to ſee me, examined me with malignancy, and all their countenances expreſſed the moſt inſulting and cruel irony. I diſtinctly heard diſcourſe equally injurious and vulgar: but what moſt ſtruck me was a woman talking to her daughter: "*Doſt thou ſee, child,*" ſaid ſhe, "*how ugly vice makes a perſon? Look, look how altered ſhe is?*"

How

How ſhocking it is to be the object of ſuch reflexions! It debaſed me in my own eyes, and that moment the conſoling teſtimony of a pure conſcience became almoſt uſeleſs and inſignificant. We may, without emotion, ſupport hatred and perſecution: but who can be inſenſible to marked contempt when it is thought deſerving, and which can neither be aſcribed to malice which affects it, nor to envy which delights in its error?

I ſhall not undertake to deſcribe all that I felt upon leaving London: it ſeemed as if I was loſing the deareſt part of myſelf, and every ſtep I removed from it took away part of my ſtrength and courage. But what lively and cruel emotions were yet alternately to revive and oppreſs my heart! Having taken a circuitous road, that I might not meet with the ſame inns wherein I had reſted with lord Clarendon, I thereby very much prolonged my journey, which was as tedious as painful and fatiguing.

fatiguing. I at laſt arrived at the place of my exile. Aurora then began to appear, and my eyes, bathed in tears, could diſtinguiſh the dwelling formerly ſo dear to me, where I ſpent the only happy days of my life. I ſoon diſcovered the charming wood where I paſſed ſuch delightful evenings, and the meadow which terminated it, where we walked together. There a tree grows, upon which Love itſelf engraved plighted oaths, now neglected and violated. Each object recalled to my mind the moſt pleaſing remembrances: every thing ſpeaks to me of my paſt happineſs; every thing paints it in ſuch ſtriking colours, that I cannot conceive it is like a dream, vaniſhed for ever. Alas! I bring back with me the ſame ſentiments; and although theſe places are not changed, yet they now ſeem to me only a frightful deſert. The moment I perceived the caſtle, I felt a palpitation and oppreſſion of heart, which almoſt entirely deprived

deprived me of the power of reſpiration. I could no longer reflect, no longer think, but I felt myſelf fainting; and without being able to ſhed a tear, I was ſuffocated, and had not even ſtrength to complain. I now arrived. The keeper, who came to meet me, could ſcarcely recollect me; and viewing me with pity, repeated theſe words: "What! is this my lady Clarendon?"—They took me out of the carriage, and conducted me to my apartment without my knowing any thing of it. However, in caſting my eyes upon what ſurrounded me, I ſoon recovered. I found myſelf in a cloſet, the wainſcot of which lord Clarendon had painted, and in which I myſelf aſſiſted. Each pannel repreſented ſome intereſting circumſtance of our life. Every where his face and mine were to be ſeen; every where he was proſtrated at my feet, or occupied about me. I ſaw myſelf adored and happy. Floridneſs, youth, and happineſs ſhone upon my face.

But

But one picture particularly attracted my attention, which had for its title *The adieus of love.* It repreſented lord Clarendon, with ſorrow expreſſed upon his countenance, tenderly preſſing me in his arms; and at the bottom of the picture were written, by his own hand, the words he himſelf ſaid to me, *Can it really be for eight days!*

"O God!" cried I, "and I have juſt left him for ever! He has baniſhed me with ignominy; he ſaw me depart, almoſt dying, deſpairing, and I received nothing but teſtimonies of hatred and contempt! Ah! unfortunate creature that I am! what abode have I choſen for my laſt aſylum! is it that I might better know or more ſenſibly feel all that I have loſt?"—In pronouncing theſe words, I chanced to turn my eyes upon a glaſs which was near me. Being for a long time ill, and overwhelmed with grief, I was not in a ſtate to perceive the change of my figure, and had paid

paid but very ſlight attention to it: but at that moment I was greatly ſtruck. I compared myſelf to what I was before, without being able to know my features. An exceſſive meagreneſs disfiguring them, at once deprived me of floridneſs and youth. Inſtead of thoſe lively colours which I admired in my portraits, I only ſaw upon my face a mortal paleneſs. A melancholy countenance, with languid eyes, ſucceeded my former ſmiling and animated appearance, and the lively and brilliant looks which, in thoſe pictures, ſo well expreſſed love and happineſs. This ſorrowful compariſon inſpired me with a ſentiment of compaſſion for myſelf, which at firſt completely enervated my courage. I found myſelf ſo much to be pitied, that I could behold no other end to my troubles but death. The ſituation in which I ſaw myſelf perſuaded me that I ſhould not very long wait for it; and notwithſtanding my exceſſive grief, this idea forcibly ſtruck,

but

but did not conſole me. I was then perhaps more deeply afflicted than in the firſt moments of my deſpair: but I myſelf relented at my deſtiny. This ſecret inſtinct, which attaches us to life, already expelled from my heart any precipitate and violent reſolutions: I had invoked death, and then did not deſire it. Waiting for it with reſignation, its idea began to trouble me without my perceiving it, and ſenſibility by degrees returned to me. I continued ſome days in this painful and dull ſituation; my ſoul and imagination grew indifferent, and I did not give myſelf up to thoſe impetuous tranſports which had almoſt conſumed me. At laſt the fervor and delirium of paſſions left me: but although weak, languiſhing, and diſcouraged, life was not leſs inſupportable. I could not employ myſelf: I experienced a continual oppreſſion of heart; and I do not believe that for the firſt fifteen days I was more than half an hour without crying. Every thing tired or afflicted me. My people ſcarcely dared

to

to approach and ſpeak to me; and the ſhort time I ſpent at my toilet cauſed me mortal uneaſineſs. Dull, ſilent, and diſcompoſed, I thought it a trouble being ſometimes obliged to articulate the words *yes* or *no*. After dinner, I ordered my ſervants to leave me alone, and upon no pretext whatever to come into my room the remainder of the day. When all my people went out, the noiſe of opening and ſhutting the doors made me ſad; and conſidering the lonelineſs of the vaſt apartment, it ſeemed to me as if I was deſerted, abandoned by all nature; and then tears began again to flow. "Alas!" cried I with bitterneſs, "I am hated, calumniated, and forgotten at London; no one pities me nor thinks of me; and I here find only a frightful ſolitude! I am a ſtranger to every thing which ſurrounds me; they fly from and deſert me; and I ſhall end ſuch a deplorable life without inſpiring the ſlighteſt ſentiment of compaſſion." Thus my days were ſpent in

tears

tears and lamentations. Sometimes I walked about my room: but if my eyes chanced to fall upon a looking-glaſs, I ſtopped, and ſometimes paſſed a quarter of an hour viewing myſelf with an aſtoniſhment always equally violent and ſorrowful. Then raiſing my eyes, overflowed with tears, "Great God!" ſaid I, "whom do I ſee in this glaſs—in this glaſs, which two years ago repreſented to me a figure ſo different?"—In ſhort, every thing affected me, or produced in my mind ſome afflicting reflexions. Sometimes I could not hear the leaſt noiſe out of doors, without ſtarting and receiving a diſagreeable impreſſion. If they ſpoke in the yard, if I heard ſome words pronounced under my windows, and eſpecially if I heard any one laugh or ſing, I loſt all patience; thinking that, taking advantage of my troubles, they were inſulting me. At other times, ſtillneſs and ſilence excited in me a kind of terror which redoubled my ſadneſs; and my dejected ſoul became ſuſceptible of a

number

number of caprices and fancies which are uſually the conſequence of long grief, together with decay of health. I always ſat up late at night, and did not go to bed but with extreme reluctance. When my curtains were cloſed around me I had leſs diſtraction, and then more entirely gave way to my grief. Sometimes heavineſs procured me, at intervals, a few hours reſtleſs ſleep; and the only time I experienced a ſenſation of joy was at the moment I felt myſelf falling aſleep. "At laſt," ſaid I to myſelf, "there will be ſome ceſſation to my thoughts and ſufferings!"—But, alas! I again beheld, in my dreams, the cruel picture of my deſtiny.

Meanwhile my health daily impaired: I ſaw death nearer than ever, and the idea of my total diſſolution affected and ſoon entirely occupied me. "What!" cried I, "ſhall I end my days, leaving a reputation unjuſtly blemiſhed? Shall I die at the age of twenty-one?"—This thought inſenſibly

ſenſibly gave riſe to other reflexions, by which I profited. "Such is," ſaid I, "the terrible effect of violent paſſions, when we do not endeavour to ſuppreſs them! Mine is lawful, but can exceſs ever be ſo? It is a huſband whom I love: but if we had never been united by ſacred ties—could I have then conquered my paſſion?—Ah! have I empire enough over my heart—can I triumph over a ſentiment which governs it, and have I moderated the deſpair which leads me to the gates of death?—I am only a weak and fooliſh woman. What was wanting to thoſe women, who are culpable, to make them reſiſt temptation? Courage and reaſon; and I want both. I ſhould be ranked in their claſs, for I have not the virtues which preſerve us from being criminal; and if I am not ſo, I owe it to my deſtiny. If I had not been the wife of lord Clarendon, could I have ſeen him deſpairing at my feet, without yielding to

other temptations? And with a ſoul ſo paſſionate, and having ſuch little empire over myſelf, would I have, in ſhort, fulfilled my duty? Whoever does not know how to conquer paſſion, whoever wants courage, can only poſſeſs imperfect and frail virtues, and circumſtances alone make them honeſt or criminal. What! ought not I to be undeceived? Who inſpired me with ſuch tender and profound ſentiments? Was it only the attraction of a charming figure? Can I be deſpicable enough to have permitted ſuch a cauſe to produce an inclination which decided the deſtiny of my life? No, no; it was the certainty of being ſolely beloved; it was this ſtrong perſuaſion I entertained of reigning for ever in a heart as delicate as ſenſible; and does this error ſtill remain? Who can, then, excuſe me? Here every thing repreſents to me lord Clarendon, ſuch as he formerly thought himſelf, and ſuch as I believed him to be: but, in ſhort, it is

nothing

nothing but a chimera; this faithful and paſſionate lover no longer exiſts; he is dead to me, and I may now lament his loſs. But I ought to forget him, whoſe ingratitude, inconſtancy, and cruelty have changed into another man, unworthy of being regretted. This laſt idea made ſuch a deep impreſſion upon my imagination, that I really formed two beings of lord Clarendon. When I repreſented him ſuch as I left him in London, I only experienced indignation and reſentment; and I did not believe I was miſtaken in thinking that I would again ſee or approach him with repugnance: but being unable to eſteem, and not daring to confeſs that I loved him, ſuch as he was, I recollected him ſuch as he formerly was, and I ſeparated the one idea from the other. He was no longer that diſdainful and cruel huſband who made me ſhed tears; he was an eſteemed lover, and worthy of being ſo, whoſe remembrance only excited my af-

fection and gratitude. And that nothing might be wanting to complete my fooliſh notion, I ſuppoſed him dead, and fixed his death at the time we ſet out for London. Theſe ideas only occurred ſucceſſively, and after long and frequent reveries. At firſt I conceived it as a romance: but without carrying the extravagance ſo far as to perſuade myſelf it was real, I at length thought of nothing elſe; and thus making a variation in my grief, I wept for an imaginary being, and believed that I forgot lord Clarendon. It is perhaps leſs frightful to bemoan the death of our lover than his inconſtancy. This cruel conflict of oppoſite ſentiments which infidelity cauſes, this mixture of anger and reſentment, of humiliation and love, is certainly the muſt violent ſtate that a ſenſible and proud heart can experience.

However, time gradually abated the trouble and agitation of my ſoul: melancholy ſucceeded deſpair; and being daily accuſ-

accuſtomed to ſee all the objects which recalled my paſt felicity, their impreſſion became leſs lively, and, by habit, wore away. I at laſt perceived that a cure was not impoſſible to be obtained; and this idea gave me freſh courage in trying to effect it. By inſenſibly triumphing over ſuch an unhappy paſſion, I became ſuſceptible of new regrets, certainly leſs afflicting, but which appeared to increaſe in proportion as love diminiſhed in my heart. Till then I had exiſted only for one ſole object. In this opinion I had conſidered my whole glory: but by taking my ſenſibility from him, it all returned to myſelf. I deplored the loſs of my reputation—was even aſtoniſhed at having ſo little reflected upon it, and at having been, till now, in ſuch a ſmall degree affected by it. I endeavoured to conſole myſelf by the idea that in the courſe of time, which always diſcovers truth, juſtice would be ſooner or later rendered to me. I have ſince known, that to obtain it, two things are neceſſary—en-

joying a great fortune, and not quitting ſociety. A hoſpitable houſe makes all be forgotten, and at laſt juſtifies every thing. The world has too much malignity, and is too inconſiderate to rectify its unjuſt ſentences; its rigorous decrees are without appeal, unleſs what concerns its pleaſures makes it revoke them: it voluntarily abjures a favourable prejudice, but never abſolves the deſerters it has condemned. My reſentment againſt lord Clarendon gained new ſtrength. By reflecting upon his conduct, (till then I had only thought of his ſentiments,) I imagined, with the greateſt indignation, that being certain of my innocence, and far from trying to juſtify me, he confirmed, by his proceedings towards me, all that hatred and malice had dared to publiſh. The eſteem of others became ſo neceſſary to me, that I began to be uneaſy about the opinion which the few ſervants who attended me, and particularly the honeſt and faithful Thomſon, would have

have of me. To enter into converſation upon this ſubject, I one day aſked him why he did not warn me of the perfidy of my women. "I only knew of it," anſwered he, "when it was of no uſe to inform you. I well knew that they went every morning to lady Bolton, lady Nevill, and lady Elby, but I was then ignorant of what was ſcheming."—"And did not you hear your fellow-ſervants ſay that they had ſeen me, at night, going towards the garden, while my lord was at Bath?"—"I heard it, but not clearly, and without comprehending what they were talking about. They miſtruſted me, knowing I was not capable of betraying my lady."—"But, Thomſon, what do you think of all this? Do you believe me guilty?"—"I have not reflected upon it. It is none of our buſineſs to judge our miſtreſſes."—"Have you ever ſeen me, at night, going down ſtairs?"—"No, my lady: I never followed the trade of a ſpy."—"Well, Thomſon,

Thomſon, I really went down ſtairs, at night, to the firſt floor."—"That is no buſineſs of mine. My lady has always been good and generous to me, and I ought to be grateful: but I have nothing to do with other matters." At theſe words I begged Thomſon to liſten to me attentively, and I conciſely related to him the ſtory of Ophelia's two water-colour paintings. Notwithſtanding the explicit manner in which I endeavoured to give him this recital, Thomſon did not comprehend much of it: but he liſtened to me with reſervedneſs and confuſion. He ſaid, himſelf, *it was no buſineſs of his.* It was of little importance to him whether I was innocent or not, as he only judged me by my behaviour towards him; and if all mankind thus conducted themſelves in ſociety, we ſhould no longer find duplicity and ingratitude.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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